National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT: AN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR THE 90s

BY

IRENE ROGOZINSKI

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of **MASTER OF EDUCATION**

IN

ADULT AND HIGHER EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT, CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING 1993

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-82134-5

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: **Irene Sophia Rogozinski**

TITLE OF THESIS: **PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT: AN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR THE 90s**

DEGREE: **MASTER OF EDUCATION**

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: **1993**

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as herein before provided neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.

Irene Rogozinski

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

10828 18 Avenue

Edmonton, Alberta

T6J 6P1

DATED April 5, 1993

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT: AN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR THE 90s** submitted by **IRENE ROGOZINSKI** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **MASTER OF EDUCATION** in **ADULT AND HIGHER EDUCATION**.

A.G. Konrad
Supervisor

Lloyd Stern

Sue M. Scott

DATE April 5, 1993

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my

husband

STEFAN ROGOZINSKI

whose love, support and enthusiasm

sustained me as I journeyed

toward achievement of this goal.

Abstract

The evolution of the global marketplace greatly expanded the business world's competitive domain. To succeed, studies have shown that organizations must move away from traditional approaches toward participative management strategies which involve employees in organizational decision making and empower them to make individual decisions with minimal bureaucratic control.

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceived degree of empowerment in an organization, analyze perception discrepancies between identified groups, solicit reasons for perception discrepancies and suggest change strategies.

Quantitative and qualitative techniques were blended to collect data to meet this study's research objectives. A researcher-designed survey based on current literature was used to examine perceived empowerment levels and identify perception discrepancies between managers and other employees and between head office and branch office staff. Focus groups considered reasons for perception discrepancies and suggested change strategies.

In general, survey results revealed an optimistic view of the sponsoring organization's dedication to participative management but displayed an apparent incongruity between commitment and action. These results also exposed a higher degree of perception congruence between head office and branch office employees than between managers and other employees.

Focus group discussion results yielded considerable praise for the

sponsoring organization's efforts to instill a participative culture as evidenced by the large number of survey items with high scores and the degree of perception agreement among respondent groups. Perception differences were largely attributed to differences among departments and among individual managers in their commitment to empowerment and sustaining action. Change strategies with numerous supporting implementation suggestions were generated with specific emphasis on ways to foster teamwork across various existing boundaries. Improvement suggestions with respect to recognition practices also received considerable attention.

This study embodied participative principles in its design. The quantitative component provided **all** members of an organization with an opportunity to express their views on how far the organization had travelled along the journey toward participation and empowerment. The qualitative component took the results beyond the reporting of descriptive data by inviting a randomly selected sample to interpret quantitative data and propose improvement actions.

This study provides other organizations with a way to examine their progress and chart future directions by presenting instrumentation and a research strategy for future validation. This research also explored the change agent role in supporting managers in organizational change, opening the door for future exploration of this issue.

Acknowledgements

The author expresses sincere gratitude to Dr. A. G. Konrad who served as the advisor for this thesis. His excellent guidance, assistance and continued support from the beginning of this study to its culmination greatly contributed to the quality of the end results. The counsel and assistance received from the members of the thesis committee, Dr. S. Scott and Dr. L. Steier, were also greatly appreciated.

The author is especially thankful to the organization who not only agreed to sponsor this study but also actively encouraged its members to participate. The author is particularly appreciative of the members for taking part in such large numbers and with such enthusiasm.

Finally, the author is deeply grateful to family, colleagues and friends for their continued support and patience while this study unfolded. Special appreciation is extended to the author's husband and daughter who made personal sacrifices to help this goal to be realized.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ABSTRACT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER

I. THE PROBLEM

Introduction 1

Statement of the Problem 3

Research Objectives 3

Assumptions 3

Delimitations of the Study 4

Limitations of the Study 4

Definition of Terms 5

Need for the Study 6

Organization of the Thesis 7

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH 9

The Evolution of the Business Environment 10

Organizational Characteristics of a Participative Environment 14

The Role of the Manager 19

What the Participative Environment Means for Employees 24

Transitional Approaches 27

Support of the Transition Process 31

Blending Methodologies in Studying Organizational Issues 32

Focus Groups 35

Conclusion 38

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 39

Population and Sample 39

Type of Data 43

Instrumentation

- Questionnaire 46
- Focus Groups 50

Describing the Perceived Degree of Empowerment

- Type of Data 51
- Data Collection Methodology 51
- Treatment of the Data 52
- Presentation of the Data 52

Identifying and Comparing Perception Discrepancies

- Treatment of the 53
- Presentation of the Data 53

Analyzing Perception Discrepancies and
    Suggesting Change Strategies
    Type of Data 53
    Data Collection Methodology 54
    Treatment of the Data 55
    Presentation of the Data 56

Conclusion 56

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS 57

Sample Profile 57

Describing the Perceived Degree of
    Empowerment 60

    Survey Results 61
    Narrative Comments 75

Perception Discrepancies

    Managers and Employees 82
    Head Office and Branch Office Staff 87

Analyzing Perception Discrepancies 90

    Manager and Employee Perception
    Discrepancies 91
    Head Office and Branch office
    Perception Discrepancies 97

Change Strategy Suggestions 100

    Head Office Groups 101
    Branch Office Group 109

The Focus Group Experience 111

Conclusion 113

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 116

Summary 116

Purpose 117
Research Objectives 118
Methodology 118
Data Analyses 119
Findings 120

Conclusions 129

Organizational Commitment 129
The Role of the Manager 130
Employee Expectations 131
Improvement Strategies 131
Process and Contextual Framework 131
Blending Methodologies in Studying Organizational Issues 132

Implications 133

Support for Current and Future Related Research 133
Practical Applications for the Sponsoring Organization 134
Practical Applications for Other Organizations 136
Blending Methodologies to Study Organizational Issues 137

Recommendations 137

Actions for the Sponsoring Organization 138
Actions for Other Organizations 141
Future Research 141

REFERENCES 144

APPENDICES 151

Appendix A Survey Instrument 151
Appendix B Focus Group Participant Package and Session Materials 163
Appendix C Focus Group Feedback Materials 188

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		Page
4.1	Respondent Profile	59
4.2	Survey Results	61
4.3	High and Low Scoring Items: Rank Order and Group Means	71
4.4	Summary of Respondents' Comments	76
4.5	Manager and Employee Perception Discrepancies	83
4.6	Head Office and Branch Office Perception Discrepancies	87
4.7	Change Strategies and Implementation Suggestions - Head Office Groups	105
4.8	Change Strategies and Implementation Suggestions - Branch Office Group	110
4.9	Focus Group Feedback Summary	112

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES		Page
2.1	The Transition Process Organizational Participation and Empowerment	30
3.1	Theoretical Framework Components Organizational Participation and Empowerment	42

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the emphasis on the notion of a global economy. Regardless of whether one is an average consumer or the Chief Executive Officer of a multi-national corporation, the effects of expanded competitiveness are evident. The movement toward foreign competition, deregulation and technological advancement is forcing companies to develop organizational climates which mirror those of countries that have demonstrated success in the global marketplace (Meussling, 1987). This has spawned intensive research into Japanese industrial models and labour practices to determine why this nation continues to dominate an increasing number of markets (Minabe, 1986). These studies have introduced North Americans to terms such as participative decision-making, collaborative action, shared accountability and quality circles. Under the umbrella of the "total quality management" movement, even companies who are not directly impacted by global competition are adopting participative management as an implementation strategy to enhance their ability to meet or exceed customer expectations.

One of the keys to transforming bureaucratic organizations into participative entities revolves around empowering employees and including them in decision-making processes.

> Organizations built on control rather than empowerment find it difficult to respond to challenges presented by global competition (Murrell and Vogt, 1991, p.302).
>
> Management strategies which actively involve employees in collaborative action have resulted in improved quality and productivity, enhanced organizational functioning, role changes and increased job satisfaction (Imel, 1982, p.3).
>
> Formal worker participation schemes have been adopted by 75% of Fortune 500 companies and have resulted in sustained long term improvements (Levine and Strauss, 1989, p.32).

Employees also benefit from involvement in participative decision-making. Studies have shown that empowered employees experience improved working conditions through direct impact on their company's market position (Brossard, 1990). A positive relationship has been established between participative decision-making and job satisfaction (Wheeless, 1982).

In light of the above discussion, it is not surprising that empowerment has become a fundamental transformational strategy for the 1990s and beyond. The empowerment journey involves an organization in a growth and development process which continually takes the perceptions of all its members into account. Once progress along the path has been measured at any point, a participative environment can be carefully cultivated. An active commitment to human resource development is critical to this maturation process.

> In Sweden, training and development programs are massive efforts designed to bring democracy into the workplace through enhancing employee ability to engage in participative decision-making (Eiger, 1982, p.19).

Statement of the Problem

This thesis explored the perceived degree of empowerment within an organization and analyzed perception discrepancies by organizational level and office location. Suggested change strategies were solicited.

Research Objectives

To address the problem, this research was designed to:

1. Describe the degree of empowerment within an organization as perceived by all staff within an organization on a set of identified contributing factors;
2. Identify and compare the perception gaps between managers and employees and between head office and branch office staff;
3. Suggest reasons for perception discrepancies; and
4. Gather suggestions with respect to potential change strategies.

Assumptions

This research assumed that:

1. The organization examined in this study was committed to empowerment and participative decision-making;
2. This commitment had been communicated to employees;
3. Staff shared this commitment and understood their role in its implementation; and

4. The measures taken to ensure the confidentiality of research results were sufficient to yield open and honest responses from all individuals who chose to participate.

Delimitations of the Study

This study emphasized description rather than evaluation. It dealt with perceptions and not necessarily known, describable facts. As a result, it presents the perceptions of selected staff on the level of participation and autonomy in their organization. The change strategies arising during the study were solely suggestions and may be used, if so desired, by the organization.

This research was confined to the organization encompassed within it and should only be generalized to comparable entities. It is anticipated, however, that the research methodology used could assist others who wish to examine the concept of empowerment in their own environments.

Limitations of the Study

Although every possible measure was taken to ensure objectivity, there were components of this study which involved the researcher in a participant observer role. A number of precautions were undertaken to avoid researcher bias and to present impartial findings.

Since this research was limited to one organization, it was not possible to conduct a comparative analysis in terms of how research outcomes compared to those in other similar organizations.

Definition of Terms

Empowerment (individual). The process of coming to feel and behave as though one has power to effect change in a significant aspect of one's work as it relates to productivity, motivation and behaviour (Kizlios, 1990).

Empowerment (organizational). The process of creating an environment of increased employee autonomy, responsibility and authority (Imel, 1982).

Organizational climate. The formal and informal mechanisms which determine how decisions are made in an organization.

Participative management. Shared decision-making which involves managers in a team approach and actively solicits employee input (Chait, 1982).

Quality circles. An organizational intervention strategy to enhance productivity and product quality through employee participation. Autonomous, homogeneous groups meet to identify problems, analyze causes, recommend and implement solutions and monitor results (Hellweg, 1984).

Workplace education. Employer-sponsored training and development, in formal and informal settings, delivered at or away from the workplace.

Need for the Study

Empowerment as a key organizational strategy is not likely to go the way of many of the fads of recent years. The use of the actual term has already started to diminish but the intent behind it has survived. Other synonymous terms are currently being used to describe the concept including participative management and decision-making, self-directed teams, team-based approach and autonomous work groups.

With heightened awareness by business leaders of the importance of employee involvement to overall success and enhanced competitiveness and with the increased willingness by employees to exercise autonomy in fulfilling their responsibilities in a more andragogical sense, it is highly unlikely that we will return to the authoritarian organizations of the past (Meussling, 1987). An in-depth study of what the term means to organizations and their people and what enhances and hinders the development of a participative environment is truly valuable.

This study revealed the experiences of a number of people at different levels and office locations within a targeted organization. The results can greatly assist the targeted organization in understanding staff perceptions of the progress made toward the creation of an empowered, participative environment. A concerted measurement activity can also assist in determining whether change interventions are moving the organization toward a preferred future state. In addition, the identity and supporting roles of change agents needed to support an evolutionary process can be clarified. In fact, clear role directions for **all** staff can be derived from an investigative activity of the nature used to meet this study's research objectives.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of engaging in a comprehensive research initiative is that by actively soliciting employee input into charting progress and suggesting change strategies, the organization is sending a clear message that it is indeed committed to participation and empowerment.

Organization of the Thesis

This research was designed to examine the concept of increased participation in decision-making and employee empowerment.

Chapter One discussed the importance of this notion and identified a research problem and four supporting objectives. It presented the potential value for organizations in using a systematic approach to determining the extent to which a participative environment exists and identifying ways to cultivate it.

Chapter Two centres around a comprehensive literature review in the area of creating and maintaining a participative environment and presents a process framework synthesizing the work of researchers in this area. Since this study blends quantitative and qualitative methodologies to meet its research objectives, theoretical perspectives on this type of research approach are presented.

Chapter Three describes the methodologies, instruments, sampling and research procedures which were used to meet this study's research objectives. To clarify the type of data required to support this research problem, the process framework presented in Chapter Two is expanded to include the data elements for each process phase. This expansion resulted from a synthesis of the research in the area of participation and empowerment.

Chapter Four presents and analyzes the findings of the study in terms of the research objectives and the framework developed for this study.

Chapter Five presents a summary of the study, conclusions and implications which logically emerge from this study, including theoretical and methodological implications for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

In recent years, the notions of participative, team based management and employee empowerment have received considerable attention in a variety of academic and business publications.

The discussion of the concept of a collaborative management approach revolves around a number of themes. The first theme involves the apparent inevitability of organizational transformation toward participation and empowerment. The rapidly evolving global business environment is necessitating a metamorphosis from traditional, hierarchical structures to flexible, non-bureaucratic entities. This transition has numerous benefits for the organization as a whole and for its employees as well.

Secondly, the research in the area of participative management shows that there are clear organizational characteristics which contribute to an organization's ability to address the contextual challenges presented by the changing business environment.

The third theme that emerges in the literature concerns the role of the manager in an organization's transition toward increased participation. To realize the benefits of this metamorphosis, managers must fundamentally change roles and behaviour which supported traditional management models. This shift poses a number of dilemmas which they must face and resolve as organizations move away from customary, bureaucratic approaches.

The fourth theme discussed in the literature presents the notion of empowerment and participation from the employees' perspective.

The fifth theme presents approaches that organizations can use to affect the changes that need to occur to introduce and maintain increased participation.

This literature review includes a process framework which can guide the journey toward a participative, empowered culture. Two of the process phases contained within it give form to the remainder of this research study.

Because this study incorporates quantitative and qualitative methodologies, this chapter contains a review of these research approaches in studying organizational issues. Since the qualitative component of this research utilized focus groups, theoretical perspectives on the use of this technique are also presented.

The Evolution of the Business Environment

According to Barczak et al. (1987), we are in an era of turbulent change which is varied and unpredictable. Rapid technological advances, increasing deregulation, economic growth, escalating global competition and major demographic and value shifts are forcing organizations to respond or risk collapse. Byrd (1987) added the information explosion phenomenon, the transformation of a manufacturing-based economy to a service-based one, the increased emphasis on entrepreneurship and innovation and the nature of today's heterogeneous workforce to the list of urgent issues which the business world must address.

As early as the 1970s, it became apparent that traditional organizational structures could not respond to marketplace demands. This condition prompted business leaders to search for better ways to operate. The undeniable success of Japan in the global economy provoked intense interest into the management approach underlying their prosperity and enhanced ability to compete. This small country, plagued with an inferiority label, seized initiative in a dozen key technologies including factory automation, consumer electronics, microchips and aerospace and impressed the business world with resulting productivity advances in a relatively short time. The corresponding increase in American efficiency was a mere 1%. To illustrate, the average Japanese worker contributes **twenty-seven** formal suggestions in **one** year while the typical American employee proposes **one** improvement idea every **thirty-seven** years (Minabe, 1986). The apparent explanation for this discrepancy is that the Japanese "Type Z" organization focuses on interdependent leadership and a commitment to multi-level worker involvement in decision making (Chait, 1982).

Japan is not the only country which has discovered the value of actively involving workers in contributing to organizational effectiveness and growth. Sweden's initiative in democratizing the workplace has also received a great deal of attention in the literature. The fundamental belief driving this commitment is that if workers experience greater involvement in their working life, they will be more inclined to contribute to the greater good of society. The Swedish government has passed legislation and given financial support to facilitate the inclusion of employees in workplace problem solving (Eiger, 1982). These measures have allowed companies to provide comprehensive training to employees to enable them to participate in the management of their companies. Swedish companies engage in collaborative activities such as including employees in the governing boards of their companies. These supportive ventures yield positive results. For example, Katz and Kahn (1978) studied improved approaches to work design in Sweden's Volvo plant in Kalmar. Increased morale and significant productivity gains were found in those teams which were not organized around the traditional assembly line approach (Eiger, 1982).

Wellins et al. (1991) presented the results of a study conducted by Eric Trist in 1981 with British coal miners in which some of the miners were formed into teams and given the authority to do their work as deemed appropriate by team members. He found clear indications of increased productivity and job satisfaction as a result of enhanced job control. He also found that these workers were better able to respond to changing market conditions.

North American researchers have also studied the mutual benefits of organizational transition toward increased participation and empowerment. Semler (1989) cited increased productivity and quality, greater job satisfaction, improved customer service and decreased waste as benefits for organizations who implement strategies for greater employee involvement. Baloff et al. (1989) added reduced resistance to change, enhanced creative problem-solving and increased organizational effectiveness to the list of potential benefits.

Despite the empirical evidence, stagnant productivity in North American countries continues to be a concern. What is the cause? Orsburn et al. (1990) consulted Jack Welch, Chief Executive Officer of General Electric, who has made significant strides in transforming this well-known company into a dynamic competitor. In his view, the causes of the productivity malaise include the oppressive weight of corporate bureaucracy, employee alienation and declining workplace motivation. The worker perspective on this alarming condition was presented by Orsburn et al. (1990) in describing a study conducted by Daniel Yankelovich for Psychology Today in which workers were asked to comment on their views of the productivity crisis. Yankelovich was told that although the work ethic was alive and well and workers wanted to work hard, contribute to a group effort and feel a sense of accomplishment, they in fact performed to a minimal level because of a long-term resentment about how work is managed and rewarded.

What then is the solution to this apparent widespread productivity lapse? How can employees be mobilized to advance continuous improvement? Orsburn et al. (1990) suggested that a commitment to team-based operations can in fact be a competitive strategy to reduce time-wasting bureaucracy and to increase employee motivation. They postulated that a planned process for giving responsibility to workers who know what to do at their level and when to get others involved was the way to ensure organizational effectiveness. In short, they suggested that creating the atmosphere for empowerment was the key to significant performance gains and elimination of the productivity crisis.

Organizational Characteristics of a Participative Environment

Numerous North American authors have dedicated considerable effort to studying participative management and have earned credibility in business and academic environments. The large number examined for this review all seem to agree that organizations who wish to enhance their competitive advantage will not have a choice. They will be forced to move toward a participative environment to realize the benefits that other global business leaders have achieved in terms of quality, flexibility, increased productivity and cost effectiveness, not to mention employee satisfaction and continuous development. The researchers clearly define the dynamic organizational characteristics which support this transition and place great emphasis on the notion of participative management as a **continual** journey.

To place the notion of participative decision-making into an organizational effectiveness context, Beckhard et al. (1977) identified the following characteristics of healthy organizations:

1. Work is managed against goals and plans;

2. Form follows function;

3. Decision-making occurs nearest the information source regardless of position in the organizational hierarchy;

4. The presence of a win/lose environment is virtually non-existent;

5. The organization in its entirety and the parts within it interact with each other as well as with the larger environment; and

6. A management-supported atmosphere of shared value clearly exists.

The research examined for this literature review seemed to be in agreement that these characteristics were not evident in traditional organizations.

> Traditional organizations are a series of interlocked power/dependence relationships with a structure that is dependent on powerlessness of large numbers of people. In empowered organizations, power becomes diffuse. Power and independence are replaced by influence and interdependence (Carr, 1991, p.38).

It seems apparent that vertical, hierarchically structured organizations do not have the ability to respond to changing needs and innovate in ways which the global marketplace is demanding. Shonk (1992) suggested that to realize notable gains in both individual and organizational performance, we must move **from** a control-based philosophy in which employees are regulated by managers **to** one which is driven by employee commitment to the organization through participation and self-control.

Why has North American industry apparently failed to make this philosophical shift? Wellins et al. (1991) discussed the difficulty in breaking with traditionally accepted practices. The hierarchical pyramid has been viewed as the most effective way for an organization to function for a considerable period of time. Frederick Taylor (1947), the father of modern industrial engineering, recommended that the best way to manage organizations was to standardize worker activities into simple, repetitive tasks and engage in close supervision. The decision-making and controlling activities must be left to top management. Since that time, organizations have committed energy and resources to operating in a way which supports the belief that employee input significantly slows down production. It would appear that the actual reverse of this tenet is the case.

The authors are unanimous in stating that a vocal commitment to a less conventional approach alone will not automatically result in productivity improvements.

> To realize these benefits, everyone in an organization must be empowered. All members must be responsible for a "piece of the action" and must be given training in self-management (Carr, 1991, p.42).

To build on the notions of shared responsibility and corresponding training, an organization needs to undertake other transitional activities to ensure success. Orsburn et al. (1990) identified a number of requirements to build the requisite foundation including top level commitment in the form of a dedicated and courageous champion, management-employee trust, encouragement for risk-taking, shared information, adequate resources and operations which are conducive to work teams.

Vogt et al. (1988, p.99) cited the following activities as essential to the healthy development of the participative work groups concept:

1. Sufficient planning needs to take place to prepare for organizational change and the evolution of the group role in decision-making;
2. The organizational hierarchy must support the creation of work groups by removing other priorities and demands on worker time;
3. The degree of uncertainty within the organization must be taken into account; and
4. Traditional leadership styles which negate group synergy must be carefully replaced with approaches which encourage diversity and innovation.

Studies have shown that the underlying themes permeating empowered organizations are coordination, integration and facilitation and not control. Barczak et al. (1987) cited a number of necessary pre-requisites for organizational empowerment. A willingness to transcend traditional operational patterns must be evident as well as a willingness to experiment. A vision which can be used as a focal point for giving form and direction to a changing organization must be created. Employees should be actively involved in identifying the values and norms underlying this vision. A high degree of alignment among members and a transcendence of traditional role requirements must exist. All members of an organization should be empowered to care, share and trust. There is a decreased emphasis on status relationships and a commitment to the concept of emergent leadership which involves selecting a leader according to the nature of the task to be performed.

Wellins et al. (1990) identified numerous ways in which to differentiate participative organizations from traditional ones. Such entities are leaner with fewer formal management layers in which the leader plays a coaching and supportive role as opposed to a controlling one. Rewards are based on team achievements as opposed to seniority. Information is shared rather than being viewed as a source of power. A high degree of commitment to learning is apparent in all activities.

Zeira et al. (1989) emphasized the importance of the existence of certain conditions for successfully cultivating a participative environment. A key factor for success is the commitment of senior management to the concept. The organizational structure must be flexible in terms of division of work. An environment which actively searches for innovative solutions through participative decision-making and shared communication needs to exist. An organizational culture which is excessively committed to past principles and practices is less likely to become participative. Sinetar (1988) stated that trust, a cooperative voice, alignment and regard for self and others are critical to a participative culture.

To summarize the ideas postulated by these authors, a number of factors essential in launching, nurturing and maintaining a participative climate emerge. Organizations which are open to change in operational patterns, role definitions and leadership approaches are more likely to become empowered. They are committed to continuous innovation and partnership in shared success. All members of the organization are aligned around a shared vision which they helped to create and all have access to the information and resources they need to successfully perform their duties and contribute to decision-making. Communication is open and shared to foster a trusting environment. Managers are actively committed to the concept of empowerment and adjust their roles to encourage participation. There is total dedication to lifelong learning for all members to ensure equality of opportunity to develop the ability to contribute to overall success. The organization is lean in structure and is task-driven as opposed to structure-driven and gives recognition based on team achievement rather than seniority.

The Role of the Manager

Numerous research studies have been conducted to examine the role managers play in bringing about organizational transformation. The results of these studies clearly urge managers to empower their employees.

The traditional role of managers as guardians of established practice must evolve to that of initiators of change. Managers need to be able to identify and anticipate the direction of social and political changes and understand their implications (Roeber, 1973). The skills involved in controlling and directing a closed system with defined structures and clearly defined authority need to be replaced with skills for open systems involving lateral duties which cannot be clearly identified with a particular position on an organization chart (Byrd, 1987).

Managers need to be able to anticipate, envision and empower; they must clearly demonstrate value-congruence and self-understanding.

Shonk (1992) conducted extensive interviews to identify the keys to success for organizations to move toward a participative environment. These included the incorporation of a planned, adaptive approach which is fully supported by employees and managers and has as its foundation organizational goals and change strategies which support the team-based concept.

To achieve this end, managers need a different set of skills than those appropriate to the management of vertically structured organizations. Many authors have endeavoured to define the roles and accompanying skills critical to the success of today's manager. Jessup (1990) identified three roles for managers:

1. **Administrator.** This involves managing group process, resource acquisition and communication on behalf of the group;
2. **Coach.** This centres around a manager's contribution to the development of the team; and
3. **Advisor.** This role requires the manager to provide training opportunities, review performance and participate in problem-solving on an as-needed basis.

Carr (1991) identified five essential management activities: managing alignment, managing a cooperative decision-making process, encouraging continuous learning and building and maintaining trust.

Evered et al. (1989) expanded on the "coach" role by defining it as a creator of a culture for coaching and discovering actions that enable and empower people to contribute fully and productively. In the controlling environment, people are viewed as resources to be used. In a coaching situation, relationships are action-oriented, enabling and growth-inducing. Murrell and Vogt (1991) suggested that managers also play a facilitative role by ensuring that the right leadership talents get to the right place. They went on to say that in an empowering organization, managers need to share information, continually develop their people, share responsibility and involve employees in planning and decision-making.

In a qualitative, long-term study of ninety managers, Bennis (1987) identified four management competencies including the management of attention through the creation of a vision, the management of communication by inspiring people to align themselves around the vision, the management of trust and the management of self.

Kouzes et al. (1989) listed five leadership characteristics following a quantitative study of ten thousand managers. Successful leaders are willing to challenge the status quo, inspire commitment to a shared vision, enable their people, model desired behaviours and recognize team performance.

Clemmer (1992), in his sixteen-cylinder model of a service quality system for high-powered corporate performance, devoted six cylinders to the effective management of the internal customer -- the employee. These cylinders focused on signalling commitment, education and awareness, personal skills, coaching skills, team development skills and process management through the implementation of multi-functional process improvement teams. The active implementation of the concepts presented in these cylinders directly support his notion of the direct relationship between the service internal customers receive with the attention paid to external customers.

The expectations of managers to negotiate successful transitions into these new roles is high. The journey itself is fraught with considerable grief. Managers often feel overwhelmed by increasingly open organizations and changing business environments (Sinetar, 1988). In addition, they are faced with a well-educated workforce which is very clear and vocal about expected rights within the workplace. Very often, middle managers are seen as a problem because of an apparent unwillingness to give up control and authority. Not only are they faced with their own resistance to ambiguous lines of authority but often they are expected to deal with employee resistance as well. According to Geber (1992), manager resistance issues include doubt in team ability to manage themselves, concerns over productivity and quality during the transition to the self-directed team concept, loss of personal status and bruised self-esteem.

While they are expected to empower, integrate and coach, managers may receive little attention or support from top management (Zeira et al., 1989). Geber (1992) described a "squashed tomato" effect which often occurs during the process of moving from a traditional management approach to a team-oriented one. Middle managers are pressured from above by executives who are committed to the perceived productivity and quality gains to be realized through empowering workers. Often this top group gives up little of their own authority. Workers apply pressure upon managers as they become excited about the prospect of gaining more control over their work. Given this potentially detrimental effect, it seems imperative to identify the support and development that managers need to contribute positively to organizational renewal.

The apparent benefits for supporting managers in making the transition to the new roles are considerable. Orsburn et al. (1990) postulated that through commitment to a team-based approach, executive and middle managers gain valuable time for critical business activities such as strategic planning, developing overall team strategies, coaching teams, serving as an interface between teams and the organization, championing innovative ideas, learning about new technology and working with vendors and customers. They maintained that many companies often eliminated the need for organizational layers, and engaged in "downloading" and "downsizing" which resulted in increased streamlining and overall efficiency. An additional byproduct of enhanced employee involvement is the commitment to corporate success which often results. In a typical, traditional organization, executives are encumbered by tactical decision-making, managers retain control, supervisors make all operational decisions and workers do only what is necessary to meet externally imposed standards. In the transformed company, executives concern themselves exclusively with strategic decisions; managers and "team facilitators" make room for the innovation that motivated workers produce when they are encouraged to exceed challenging, self-identified standards.

What the Participative Environment Means for Employees

The transition from a bureaucratic approach to a participative one has profound implications for staff within organizations who have chosen to embark on the journey toward increased autonomy and participation in decision-making. The literature provides an interesting comparison of employee experience within traditional and collaborative management approaches.

Moss-Kanter et al. (1979, p.4) presented an enlightening way of viewing traditional, vertical organizations:

> Those with power at the top are dependent on the conformity of the masses. For this, they receive the highest level of reward and recognition.
>
> Those at the bottom have accountability for results but do not have the capacity to act. They are virtually powerless. For this, they receive the least reward and recognition, are considered expendable and are given minimal chance to grow.
>
> Those who are in the middle are "on top" for some and "on the bottom" for others. As a result, they tend to adopt a low-risk, play it safe attitude.

Research has shown that employees in traditional and empowering organizations live in dramatically different worlds. In their studies of excellent companies, Peters et al. (1982) found that many organizations espouse outdated rules that assume the incompetence of the average worker. In contrast, they found that excellent companies treated their people with dignity and respect and created an atmosphere of equal partnership in shared success. Kizlios (1990) elaborated on the potential destructiveness of powerlessness and described the notion of empowerment and participative management as the process of teaching people to help themselves, to become shapers of their own destinies. He emphasized the importance of changing organizational practices to support the development of an empowering mentality among employees and cautioned organizations to go beyond the "lip service" stage to avoid the risk of causing employees to further withdraw from committing themselves wholeheartedly to organizational goals.

The concept of total quality management has firmly embedded itself in today's business world and supports the elimination of traditional organizational practices designed to limit employee participation in organizational decision-making. In fact, the involvement of employees is seen as critical to an organization's ability to create an environment of maximum service quality and continuous improvement. Clemmer (1992) has amassed considerable data which suggest a direct relationship between the quality of service that customers receive and the treatment that employees receive. The better the service that employees feel they obtain from their companies, the more inclined they are to "go the extra mile" for their clients. Two specific studies cited by

Clemmer were conducted by Schneider and Bowen (1990) in universities and banks. In both cases, there was direct evidence to support the linear relationship Clemmer described. It is clear that employees must experience a total quality environment to increase their own effectiveness. This in turn allows them to help their companies compete in a increasingly aggressive business climate.

The trend toward participative management offers employees some interesting and exciting challenges. The notion of emergent, shared leadership in which all individuals can potentially exert influence on the change process allows employees to share in the power that has traditionally been reserved for management (Barczak et al., 1987). Schlesinger et al. (1984) identified several characteristics of shared activities which encourage employees to direct intelligence, expertise and skills to the management of the organization. These ventures exhibit increased involvement in decision-making, an emphasis on skill development, increased autonomy for action and decision-making and reduced status distinctions traditionally associated with hierarchical relationships.

These characteristics suit the nature of a well-educated work force made up of sophisticated consumers who feel entitled to a certain number of rights in the workplace (Sinetar, 1988). Roeber (1973) stated that current employee-employer relationships will increasingly be replaced by a more democratic form of contract which ensures employee rights to have a say in the operation of the company. In the absence of this type of atmosphere, workers will be less inclined to stay with a particular company and will move on to one which is more appreciative of their rights and talents.

Transitional Approaches

A clear consensus emerges from the research. To address the challenges the global economy presents, organizations must transform themselves into participatory entities. In order for change strategies to introduce empowerment and participation into an organization to succeed, they must be planned and managed.

Barczak et al. (1987) effectively summarized the cultural changes that need to occur for a participative approach to work by stating that the organizational climate must encourage conflicting viewpoints, applaud differences and remain open to new ways of doing things. Traditional, hierarchical, vertical organizations in which every individual performs specialized and fragmented tasks which are subject to control would not appear to be a comfortable home for such a culture. A matrix organization with a fluid structure in which work group formation is based on the most appropriate structure for the task would be far more conducive to the creation of an empowered, participative environment.

To support the creation of the culture described above, tha theorists included in this review are unanimous in proposing that organizations that choose to venture out on the journey to empowerment and participation must do so in a planned and deliberate manner. It is not enough to make a commitment to such a path one day and expect it to happen immediately. The road is long and arduous and must be charted carefully in a way which is unique to each organization's needs. To achieve the cultural transition the literature suggests, organizations need to be clear on **where** they are going and **how** they are going to get there. It is therefore advisable to select and adhere to a model or framework which gives a contextual description of the preferred future organization. It is also critical to follow a process model which allows an organization to transform itself in a manner that meets not only organizational goals but also the transitional needs of its human resources.

Barczak et al. (1987) suggested that organizational evolution needs to be supported by transformative leadership, a growth-oriented culture and a commitment to learning, and proposed a process of pattern-breaking, experimenting, visioning and bonding and attunement to achieve success.

Kilmann (1989) proposed a process for planned change consisting of five tracks which address culture, management skills, team-building, strategy-structure and reward systems, suggesting a five-step process:

1. Initiating the program;
2. Diagnosing the problems;
3. Scheduling the tracks;
4. Implementing the tracks; and
5. Evaluating the results.

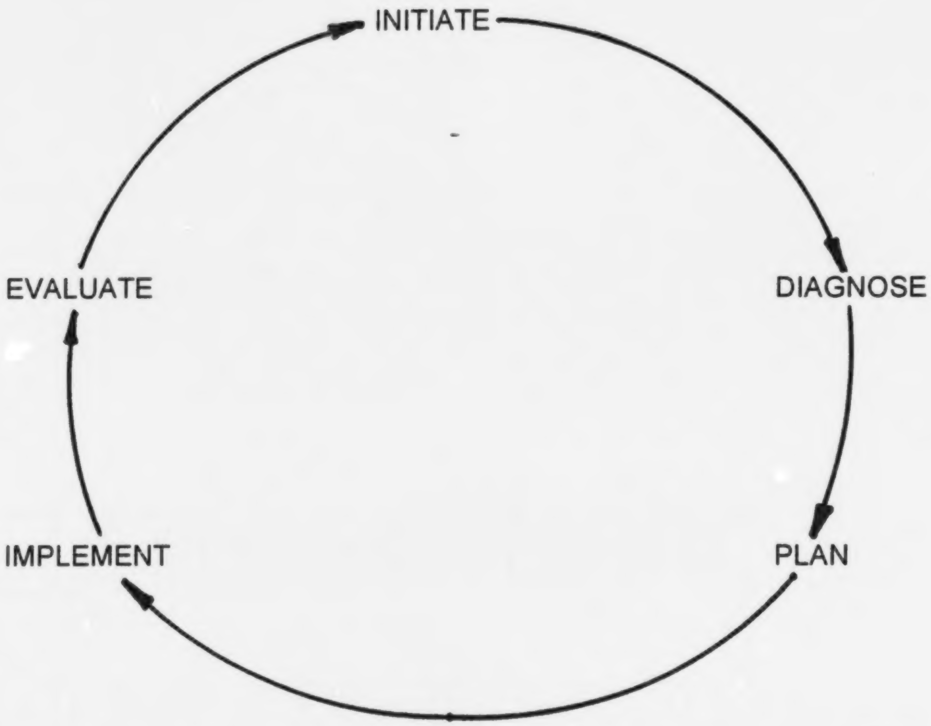
Kilmann's model provides general categories for the many contextual characteristics that researchers defined as necessary to support increased participation and empowerment. It also offers a process to sustain the transition. The evaluation component is of particular importance because it directly supports the fluid nature of a change intervention. By assessing implementation activities, an organization can fine-tune and modify its path in accordance with internal and external forces, thereby modelling a commitment to the dynamic nature of continuous improvement.

The steps outlined by Kilmann constitute the process phases for the framework adopted for this study (Figure 2.1). One-word descriptors have been utilized with one change to the terms used by Kilmann. He labelled the third step scheduling; it has been changed to "plan" to reflect the many activities involved in preparing for actual implementation.

FIGURE 2.1

THE TRANSITION PROCESS

Organizational Participation and Empowerment


INITIATE
DIAGNOSE
PLAN
IMPLEMENT
EVALUATE

Although the framework in its entirety is presented here, this research study specifically focused on the **diagnose** and **plan** phases of the model. In the next chapter, the work of the researchers reviewed for this study is synthesized and used to provide the data needs and elements to support each process phase.

Support of the Transition Process

The type of organizational transformation described in this thesis needs to be mobilized to make it happen. Although the role of executives and managers is clearly that of "championing the cause," they need support in initiating, diagnosing, planning, implementing and evaluating as described in the framework presented in this study.

The transformation of an organization has been described in the literature as a process of constant learning and unlearning and offers the opportunity for an organization to become a "learning organization."

> A learning organization is a large body of aligned individuals whose members at all levels spontaneously learn and innovate in ways that promote the well-being and mission of the organization (Kramlinger, p.48).

To support the ability to achieve this outcome, in many organizations the role of the human resource development practitioner is evolving toward that of an organizational development professional. Vogt and Murrell (1991) described the organizational development approach as one that builds on the premise that human and thus organizational behaviour can change and simultaneously improve output and empowerment of individual members.

In their role of supporting individual employee development, Barczak et al. (1987) described the operating philosophy of the professional involved in this endeavour as helping employees to extend self-responsibility, take initiative and contribute to the organization's goals. Zeira et al. (1989) described the role of the organizational development professional as helping organizations to assess opportunities and weaknesses **prior** to change implementation so as to determine the probable success of planned change efforts. Lawrie (1990) supported these notions in his description of human resource development practitioners as change facilitators.

For the organization to move in the directions it identifies for itself, the people within it need to be developed so that they can effectively participate in the journey. In the past, human resource development practitioners have concerned themselves exclusively with providing reactive services in the area of individual knowledge and skill development to enhance employee value in terms of on-the job performance. Increasingly, they are called upon to diagnose and advise on organizational change issues as well as to prepare the workforce for future directions. This suggests new roles for these professionals and the development of an enhanced skill repertoire to offer to the organization. The literature is clear in stating that it is no longer advisable for managers and employees to retain roles designed to meet the needs of pyramidal organizations. A similar transition needs to be made by human resource and organizational development professionals in order to meet the challenges of today's business world.

Blending Methodologies in Studying Organizational Issues

Denzin (1978) postulated that researchers can significantly enrich the value of their findings by collecting different types of data on the same issue. Although he recognized that past social science literature actively encouraged researchers to espouse either quantitative or qualitative methodologies, he believes that the trend toward the use of multiple methods is growing. He further stated that these research approaches are in fact complementary and can put the researcher at an advantage. In designing a study, the researcher can capitalize on the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of each approach, thereby vastly improving the quality of the findings.

Jick (1979) cautioned researchers to ensure that methodology selection completely support the research problem. The right questions must be asked in a skilled way to result in appropriate data collection and insightful data interpretation in addressing the research problem.

In terms of organizational research, Van Maanen (1979) stated that historically decision-makers were more comfortable steering the organization's course based on a set of empirical data which confirm or deny the existence of a particular issue or problem. Increasingly, the underlying reasons for the problem are taking on added importance. To the researcher, this means gathering data using a wide variety of techniques to support the existence of a particular condition as well as to isolate the meaning underlying it. Although either quantitative or qualitative data collection techniques could be used to achieve these goals, the importance of prolonged interaction with the members of a population and direct participation in its activities to gain valid understanding of the issues has been emphasized in the literature.

Downey and Ireland (1979) confirmed the value of using qualitative data to study an organization's environment. Rich data are generated in terms of participant interpretation of events and their effect on perceived environmental attributes.

To meet the data requirements of this study's research problem and objectives, it was certainly possible to use either quantitative or qualitative data collection methods. Blending these methodologies was a deliberate choice on the part of the researcher. The subject of this inquiry is such that interaction among members of the sample enriched the understanding of data collected through the use of quantitative methods. In using qualitative methods, the researcher developed an appreciation of the participants' reality by adopting a participant observer role. Without the richness of the interactions of the people directly impacted by the presence or lack of participation and empowerment, the researcher could have been in the position of interpreting quantitative data which was researcher initiated rather than participant initiated.

The issue under investigation had the capacity to evoke emotional responses in individuals. To lend credibility to the ultimate change strategies generated by this study, the emotional responses needed to be acknowledged and discussed. The researcher used the focus group technique to capitalize on reactions of this nature and help participants to transform them into workable suggestions for the future.

Focus Groups

Focus groups have been used extensively to collect data related to customer requirements of specific products or services. In recent years, this technique has gained acceptance in examining the reasons behind the existence of organizational phenomena.

> A focus group is a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. It is conducted with approximately seven to ten people by a skilled interviewer. The discussion is relaxed, comfortable and often enjoyable for participants as they share their ideas and perceptions. Group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion (Krueger, 1988, p.18).

Krueger described four ways in which the focus group technique could support a blend of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies:

1. Preceding quantitative procedures. In this scenario, the researcher uses focus groups to learn about the vocabulary and thinking patterns of the research population. In this study, this approach was used to assist in the design of the survey.

2. During a quantitative study. Focus groups can be used as one of a series of data collection techniques to confirm or deny the findings and enhance the depth and breadth of data. In this study, collecting the data to address research objectives by using qualitative techniques alone would have been very difficult, time-consuming and expensive. The fact that focus groups had a wealth of quantitative data to consider made it much easier to use this data

collection technique in the way Krueger suggests.

3. Following a quantitative study. In this case, focus groups follow the collection of a substantial amount of data using a survey. The groups are assembled to provide insight into the meaning of survey results and their subsequent interpretation. They can also suggest action strategies based on a comprehensive discussion of the results. In this study, focus groups were formed to identify reasons for perception discrepancies and to guide planning activities for the future.

4. As a sole qualitative data collection source. This technique is useful all by itself when insights are needed to enrich and support quantitative research results. In this study, this application was used to solicit focus group input as described above.

There are a number of operational issues that Krueger (1988) suggests a researcher consider before assembling a focus group:

1. The group needs to be small enough so that everyone can participate, yet large enough to stimulate a diverse range of ideas. In this study, focus group membership was set at ten.

2. The researcher needs to consider the issue of homogeneity vs. familiarity. Is it critical to the purpose of the study that people know each other? In adopting homogeneity in group formation, the researcher must be prepared for the tendency of familiarity to inhibit disclosure. In this study, participants

were grouped according to their position level in the organization for two reasons. Firstly, their perceptions of participation and empowerment needed to reflect similar realities. Secondly, interaction tends to be inhibited if one's superior is in the same group.

3. At the actual focus group session, the researcher must be acutely aware of what is happening at all times. His or her role is to moderate, listen and observe. The researcher must frame a few, simple open-ended questions to guide the discussion according to a pre-determined, sequenced list of topics to address to meet research objectives. Therefore, it is imperative that a skilled facilitator lead the sessions. In this study, the researcher has accumulated years of experience in group facilitation.

4. Focus group participants must experience objectivity and neutrality to ensure maximum disclosure. Ideally, the leader should be external to the environment and the session should be held on neutral territory. In this study, although the researcher is a member of the organization, the nature of her position is such that numerous confidential issues have been disclosed in her presence without subsequent repercussions. The resulting credibility served to minimize inhibition of interaction. To add a sense of neutrality, the sessions were conducted in facilities removed from the worksite.

Conclusion

To meet the research objectives of this study, current literature was reviewed to identify organizational characteristics which should be measured and subsequently analyzed to determine the perceived level of empowerment within an organization. The need to examine perception discrepancies among critical groups within the organization was highlighted. Specific change strategy suggestions which need to be introduced to further an organization's transformational journey were also proposed.

This study combined quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. A review of the literature in this area with specific attention to the focus group technique provided valuable insight into how best to blend these techniques to the data needs of the research problem and its supporting objectives.

This chapter provided a theoretical foundation for this research study. A thorough examination of the literature assisted the researcher in developing a process framework which could effectively guide the organizational transition toward increased participation. It also served to clarify the data needs and elements to support each process phase of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the quantitative and qualitative methodologies used to address this study's research objectives and is divided into four sections. The first section provides a contextual description of the organization under study, the population and the sample. The second section expands on the process framework presented in the preceding chapter and specifies the nature of the data needs and elements for each phase within it, with particular attention to those phases specifically addressed in this study. The third section provides a detailed description of the instrumentation used in this study. The final section presents specific data collection, treatment and presentation procedures to address each research objective.

Population and Sample

The population for this research included **all** staff of a mid-sized service organization in an urban centre in Alberta. The organization was divided into eleven organizational levels: four of these contained staff who performed clerical functions: three of the classifications contained supervisory and professional/technical staff: two of the levels included middle management staff; and the remaining two consisted of executive management.

The sample included all members (470+) in the survey portion of this research which was designed to gather data related to the first two research objectives.

Stratified random sampling was used to select managers and other employees to participate in focus groups. In total, there were eight focus groups consisting of ten members each involved in gathering data to address the third and fourth research objectives of the study.

Two years ago, the organization selected for this study made an active commitment to total quality management to enhance its ability to increase its market share and ensure superior levels of service to its clientele. Since that time, there has been an active recognition of the importance of employee involvement in charting future directions. A commitment to staff empowerment and participative management had been communicated and acted upon in a number of ways. These efforts included the creation of a shared vision, involvement of employees in strategic planning, staff participation in implementation teams and commitment to multi-functional process improvement. To support the ultimate success of these initiatives, the organization also made an active commitment to training and development to enhance both organizational and individual effectiveness. As a result, significant strides toward increased participation and empowerment appear to have been made.

The researcher conducted a search of existing documentation of the organization's activities in the areas of strategic planning, total quality management, training and development, multi-functional team utilization and shared vision design. This search yielded the following documents which provide evidence of the organization's commitment to participation and empowerment:

1. The business strategy which was devised by the organization's multi-level management team;
2. A description of the organization's team centred quality skills training program;
3. A description of a multi-functional team approach to process improvement; and
4. A description of how the organization solicited employee input into shared vision development.[1]

These documents describe **only a few** of the many initiatives the organization had undertaken to move toward increased participation and empowerment. Nevertheless, they are indicative of a commitment to this approach.

Type of Data

The literature reviewed for this study clearly identified organizational characteristics which support a participative environment and emphasized the need for organizations to embark on the journey in a planned and deliberate manner.

---

[1] These confidential documents are on file with the researcher.

To support the process framework presented in the preceding chapter, charts synthesizing the work of the researchers are presented in Figure 3.1. Specifically, the data needs and elements designed to support the process model originated in the literature reviewed for this study which identified the organizational attributes of a participative, empowered climate. Although the resulting data needs and elements for **each** process phase are presented, this study concentrated on the **diagnose** and **plan** components of the process model. Instrumentation design was based on the data needs and elements identified for these two process steps.

FIGURE 3.1

Organizational Participation and Empowerment

Theoretical Framework Components

PROCESS PHASE	DATA NEEDS	DATA ELEMENTS
INITIATE	What is driving us to change?	Identification of external/ internal forces precipitating a need to change.
	What is our vision of successful implementation of the change?	Vision of the preferred future.

PROCESS PHASE	DATA NEEDS	DATA ELEMENTS
INITIATE	What is enhancing/ inhibiting our ability to change?	Identification of contributing and/or limiting factors to attainment of the vision.
DIAGNOSE (Survey)	Where are we now?	**PERCEPTION OF THE OVERALL ORGANIZATION** Stance toward change and innovation; Shared vision; Organizational structure; Stance toward learning. **MANAGEMENT OF WORK** Independence; Shared information; Resource availability; Recognition practices. **MANAGEMENT PRACTICES** Management commitment to participation and empowerment; Management roles;

PROCESS PHASE	DATA NEEDS	DATA ELEMENTS
DIAGNOSE (Survey)	Where are we now?	**COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION PATTERNS** Open communication; Trust and respect; Participative planning and decision-making; Teamwork orientation.
DIAGNOSE (Statistical Tests)	How compatible are manager and employee perceptions?	Where are the similarities? Where are the discrepancies?
	What groups' perceptions differ significantly?	Where are the similarities and discrepancies between head office and branch office staff?
DIAGNOSE (Focus Groups)	What are the reasons behind perception discrepancies? What action is warranted?	Overall reaction to survey results; Ideas on

PROCESS PHASE	**DATA NEEDS**	**DATA ELEMENTS**
DIAGNOSE (Focus Groups)		reasons for perception similarities and discrepancies; Identification of existing team oriented initiatives and perceived impact.
PLAN (Focus Groups)	How are we going to attain our vision?	Identification of realistic, priorized change strategies.
IMPLEMENT	What is our specific action plan?	Action plan design.
	When are we going to attain our vision?	Identification of manageable timeframes.
	Who is going to help us attain it?	Selection of change agents and clarification of their role.
	How will we make our plan happen?	Communication of the plan. Level of commitment to the plan.

PROCESS PHASE	DATA NEEDS	DATA ELEMENTS
IMPLEMENT		Assignment of individual and shared responsibility.
EVALUATE	How well did our planned interventions work?	Continual reassessment of interventions to determine progress toward a preferred future state.
	What deficiencies do we need to address?	Needs-based re-entry into the appropriate phase of the framework.

Instrumentation

Questionnaire

To give an accurate "snapshot" of the perceived degree of participation in the organization, a survey instrument was designed to reflect a synthesis of contributing factors identified in the **diagnose** process phase (Figure 3.1).

Although an extensive search of commercially available instruments was conducted by the researcher, a suitable questionnaire was not located. As a result, the researcher assembled an instrument by compiling items from several sources. These items had been used extensively by a number of organizations, and their use had established the reliability and validity of the items. The questionnaire items were drawn from the following sources:

1. In an empowerment training session for managers, a very simple instrument produced by the American Management Association (1990) was used by the researcher. This questionnaire alone did not address all of the factors identified in the literature review process. However, its format was "user friendly", and the way in which the scale was presented using opposing statements at either end of a continuum was seen as very effective by the group of 30 managers who completed the questionnaire. The specific questions dealing with trust and respect (xxxvii, xxxviii), shared information (xvii) independence (xiii, xvi), resources (xix), management support (xxvii), open communication (xxxiv) and teamwork orientation (xlvi) were incorporated into this study's survey.

2. The researcher had access to a series of instruments produced by Implementation Management Associates, Inc. (1990). The questions in this study's survey which dealt with use of teams (xlix), organizational structure (viii), management commitment (xxvi, xxix), errors as learning (xii), existence of a shared vision (iii), teamwork across functional lines (l), and organization of work (ix) originated in an instrument (1990) designed to measure a company's change implementation history.

3. University Associates, a recognized leader in the field of human resource and organizational development, provides a number of tools which are based on current research in the area of organizational participation and empowerment as described in this thesis. The researcher used the following sources to locate items to measure some of the factors identified in the literature.

Empowered teams (Wellins, Byham and Wilson,1991) includes an assessment activity designed to measure the readiness of an organization for the self-directed team concept and the role of leaders in its implementation. The questions dealing with work planning (xli), initiative (xvi), nature of work (xlv), job complexity (xv), cultural support of teamwork (xlvi) management roles (xxx, xxxxi) and learning (x, xi) were reflected in the researcher-designed survey.

Empowerment in organizations: How to spark exceptional performance (Vogt and Murrell, 1991) includes an Appendix of Surveys which organizations can use to determine whether or not the corporate climate fosters empowerment. The questions used to measure staff perceptions on management's work approach (xxxii, xlvii) were drawn from these tools.

Two thirty-item inventories were designed by Kouzes-Posner (1991) to assess key leadership practices as perceived by both managers and employees. These instruments are supported by reliability and validity data as well as thorough administration instructions. The questions which measured perceptions of change and innovation (i, ii), vision (iv, v, vi, vii), recognition (xiii, xiv, xv) and planning (xiii) originated from these inventories. They also contributed to the researcher's understanding of the importance of isolating perception discrepancies.

Using these sources, the researcher designed a survey instrument specifically addressed to this study's first research objective. A copy of this instrument is included in Appendix A.

Once the instrument was designed, it was subjected to three field tests to establish face validity. A group of ten individuals from comparable organizations were asked to pilot the instrument and to try it out with others if possible. The second field test involved soliciting feedback from a twelve-member group inside the organization whose role it is to review all surveys being used with internal and external respondents. Since this internal group consists largely of managers, they suggested that the researcher conduct a focus group with staff representing all levels of the organization before the survey was administered. A third group of ten individuals was invited to participate in this focus group. The resulting modifications from **all** of these field test endeavours made the survey more easily understood and read. Although no instrument content modifications were suggested, field test feedback resulted in revisions to the introductory letter and to six of the items to increase clarity and minimize respondent misunderstanding.

Focus Groups

This study's third and fourth research objectives involved identifying possible reasons for perception discrepancies among respondents and gathering suggestions with respect to potential change strategies. A series of focus groups representing all levels of the organization were assembled to generate the data needed to support these objectives.

To support successful group operations and to ensure consistency of data collection, the following questions were used to guide focus group discussions:

1. In general, what were your reactions to survey results?
2. Why do you think there is a perception discrepancy between managers and employees on this factor? (or between head office and branch office staff).
3. What is your perception of some of the initiatives the company has already undertaken to include employees in planning and decision-making? eg. shared vision development, annual general assembly, etc.
4. What kinds of changes does the organization need to make to foster an atmosphere of participation and empowerment?
5. What order do you think these changes need to follow?

A package including a memo outlining the questions to be discussed during the focus group sessions and a set of materials was prepared and field-tested with a number of the people who participated in survey design. This package was distributed to focus group participants one week prior to their scheduled session. The researcher also designed a session format as well as a set of flipcharts and handouts to support it. The participant package and session materials are included in Appendix B.

Describing the Perceived Degree of Empowerment

This study's first research objective addressed the **diagnose** element of the framework and involved describing the degree of empowerment as perceived by all staff on a set of identified contributing factors.

Type of Data

To assess the perceived level of participation and empowerment in an organization, the literature reviewed for this study suggested a number of organizational characteristics be measured. These factors are presented in Figure 3.1 in the **diagnose** process phase.

Data Collection Methodology

Through the use of a widely read weekly employee newsletter, **all** staff within the selected organization were invited to complete the survey instrument. The instruments were coded so that they could later be separated into manager and employee and head office and branch office groupings. Each survey was accompanied by a letter (Appendix C) describing the study, assuring confidentiality of responses and asking for completed surveys to be returned within two weeks of their distribution. Respondent packages were hand-delivered in June, 1992.

To ensure a high return rate, the researcher used a number of communication vehicles to remind employees to complete the survey. These included the weekly employee newsletter, a mainframe computer network, an automated speech exchange system and regularly scheduled management meetings.

Treatment of the Data

Once the surveys were returned, a number of steps were followed to convert the raw data into a form which would clearly show the perceived degree of empowerment and participation within the selected organization.

The quantitative statistical analysis began with a tabulation of percentiles on each item for each group. The means for each item were calculated to provide a measure of central tendency and standard deviations were calculated to determine response divergence. The items were also rank ordered.

Presentation of the Data

The results of these tabulations are presented in chart form showing the means, standard deviations and ranks for each survey item. A narrative describing general perspectives on survey results accompanies the chart.

Identifying and Comparing Perception Discrepancies

The study's second research objective involved identifying perception discrepancies between managers and employees and head office and branch office staff. The type of data needed to address this research objective are presented in Figure 3.1 in the **diagnose** process phase.

Treatment of the Data

The calculated means for each questionnaire item were compared by respondent group by performing a t-test.

Presentation of the Data

The graphical illustrations were set up in a way which show only significant perception discrepancies between managers and employees and head office and branch office staff and are accompanied by textual descriptions.

Analyzing Discrepancies and Suggesting Change Strategies

The remaining research objectives centred around suggesting reasons for perception discrepancies, identifying and assessing the impact of current team oriented organizational initiatives and generating change strategy ideas.

Type of Data

The data needs and elements to support this research objective are presented in Figure 3.1 in the **diagnose** and **plan** process phases.

Data Collection Methodology

Stratified random sampling was used to create eight focus groups -- one at the management level, six at the employee level and one branch office group. Group membership was known only to the researcher. Each group consisted of ten members who were invited via telephone to participate in a one-hour discussion session to respond to questions related to research objectives three and four. Although everyone who was contacted by phone agreed to participate, some regretfully had to decline because of conflicting commitments. A letter of invitation accompanied by a summary of survey findings and a list of the questions to be discussed during the session were sent to participants one week before the scheduled session. Participants were encouraged to think about their responses to the questions but not to discuss the questions with others. Participants did not know who the other members of their group were.

A number of steps were taken to create a comfortable climate to facilitate open and honest interaction. At the beginning of each session, the researcher sought verbal permission from individual participants to tape record the proceedings for subsequent transcription and analysis. Participants were assured that only the researcher had access to the tapes and would use the information solely for the purposes of this study. At this point, participants were also informed that the tapes would be destroyed once the transcription and analysis were complete. Participants were also assured that no one else would be involved in transcribing session results and that individual identities would not be revealed in reporting outcomes because the results would be reported in summary form. In general, these preparatory activities yielded candid dialogue among focus group members.

To provide a record of the data accumulated at each session, the focus group discussion was recorded on cassette tapes except for the branch office group. During the session, participants were given handouts to record thoughts generated in small group discussions. In addition, the researcher recorded themes on flipcharts. With the exception of the branch office focus group, the researcher's assistant was present to record session highlights.

Treatment of the Data

The data gathered during this research stage were thematically organized according to the categories identified by the type of data needed to address research objectives. The resulting themes from each focus group session were compiled and rank ordered according to the perceived priority identified by participants during their focus group session. A comparison of focus group session results was conducted to identify commonalities among the groups.

A summary of each session was provided to individual focus group participants so as to validate the findings. Participants were also asked to reflect upon and provide feedback on their experience as a focus group member. Each member was given a brief feedback sheet on which they were asked to **anonymously** share their perceptions of the organization and operation of their specific focus group.

Presentation of the Data

The results of focus group activities are presented using a combination of charts and text to identify the themes which emerged with respect to reasons for perception divergences, thoughts on current team-oriented activities, priorized change strategy suggestions and their perceptions of the focus group experience.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of research design and specific data collection techniques. By expanding the process model contained in the previous chapter, the type of data that were critical to support research objectives were identified. Data collection, analysis and presentation procedures were outlined. The specific data collection instruments were described as well as the validation procedures used to support the design of the measurement tools.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study was designed to explore the perceived degree of empowerment within a selected organization, analyze perception discrepancies by organizational level and office location and suggest potential change strategies. Chapter Four presents the findings of a survey and the focus groups' discussions which were designed to gather the data needed to address the study's research objectives.

The chapter begins with a demographic profile of the sample. The findings are then presented in terms of the research objectives which were designed to:

1. Describe the degree of empowerment within an organization as perceived by all staff on a set of organizational characteristics;
2. Identify and compare the perception gaps between managers and employees and between head office and branch office staff;
3. Suggest reasons for perception discrepancies; and
4. Gather suggestions with respect to potential change strategies.

Sample Profile

The population for this study included all staff of a mid-size service organization in an urban centre in Alberta. The single organization selected for analysis had actively sought to create a participative, team based environment.

All employees received a survey designed by the researcher to collect the data needed to address the first two research objectives. Of the 470 surveys that were hand-delivered, 315 were returned, representing a 67% return rate.

Respondents were asked to identify themselves as members of one of three categories typically used within the organization. The first category, **management team member**, included executive and middle managers. The **team manager** group consisted of staff who provide direct support to management team members and fulfil supervisory functions. The **frontline staff** category included all other employees who were also asked to specify their role according to the function they fulfilled in the organization: processing/clerical services, professional/technical services or frontline supervisory duties. Using these categories, Table 4.1 provides a profile of the sample.

The majority of respondents represented the frontline employee category which reflected the actual level composition of the organization's population. The further breakdown of this category was also indicative of this configuration. It was interesting to note that the majority of management team members responded to the survey. In total, this group consisted of 43 members of which 36 responded. The corresponding percentage of the team manager and frontline employee respondents was not as high.

This study also examined perceptions of staff in branch offices. The selected organization has seven branch offices. Six of them consist of one to seven employees. The larger branch office in Southern Alberta contains twenty-two employees. In total, there were forty-two staff in the branch offices. Twenty-nine of them responded representing 9.2% of the total sample and a response rate of 52% from the branch offices.

TABLE 4.1

Respondent Profile

Employee Categories	**Number (%)**
A management team member	36 (11.4%)
A team manager	37 (11.7%)
A frontline employee	221 (70.2%)
Did not select a category	21 (6.7%)
Total	**315**
Frontline Employee Categories	
Processor/clerical	125 (56.6%)
Professional/technical	84 (38%)
Supervisor	7 (3.2%)
Did not select a category	5 (2.26%)
Total	**221**

To collect data to address the third and fourth research objectives, a stratified random selection using a table of random numbers was used to assemble eight ten-member focus groups. To ensure balanced participation from each organizational level, with the exception of front line employees, one group for each of the following categories was formed:

1. Management team members;
2. Team managers;
3. Professional/technical staff;
4. Senior processor/clerical staff including front line supervisory staff, senior processors and secretaries to executive managers;
5. Intermediate processor/clerical staff including mid-level clerical staff and secretaries to middle managers;
6. Junior clerical staff, including all entry-level positions (two groups); and
7. Branch office staff.

Describing the Perceived Degree of Empowerment

This study's first research objective was designed to determine the degree of empowerment within an organization as perceived by all staff on a set of organizational characteristics as described in the current literature. Survey results supported by related respondent narrative comments provide a portrayal of staff perceptions of the organization selected for this study.

Survey Results

Analysis of the results of combined respondent categories revealed a range of means from 4.3 to 6.2 on a seven-point scale where a score of 1 represented a highly negative perception and a 7 reflected a highly positive perception. The overall mean was 5.2. Respondent group means, standard deviations and rank order for each survey item are presented in Table 4.2.

TABLE 4.2

SURVEY RESULTS

Survey Item	Group Means	SD	Rank
View of the Organization			
Change			
Openness to innovation	5.5	1.03	11
Experimentation/risk taking	5.0	1.25	32
Shared Vision			
Existence of a vision	4.7	1.44	44
Participation in vision creation	4.8	1.65	36
Manager commitment to the vision	4.6	1.49	46
Staff commitment to the vision	4.4	1.31	49
Hope for the organization's future	6.0	1.11	4

Survey Item	Group Means	SD	Rank
Organizational Structure			
Impact of number of layers on job performance	4.6	1.57	45
Traditional vs team-oriented work organization	4.5	1.58	48
Learning			
Presence of skills to perform duties	6.0	.95	5
Company's willingness to invest in learning	6.2	1.24	1
Company's stance toward mistakes	5.1	1.45	28
How Work Is Managed			
Independence			
Degree of individual authority over decisions	4.3	1.53	50
Personal sense of job ownership	5.4	1.40	12
Job complexity and decision-making initiative	5.6	1.35	7
Support for initiative	5.2	1.40	24
Shared Information			
Information availability	5.2	1.24	27
Information timeliness	4.6	1.43	47

Survey Item	Group Means	SD	Rank
Resource availability			
Presence of adequate resources	5.3	1.05	22
Ease of acquiring resources	4.9	1.24	35
Recognition			
Personal sense of recognition	4.8	1.40	40
Recognition of individual efforts	4.8	1.52	37
Recognition of team efforts	5.3	1.36	17
Recognition from managers	4.8	1.39	41
Established ways of celebrating accomplishments	4.7	1.51	43
Management Practices			
Management Commitment			
Manager commitment to team concept	5.4	1.39	13
Manager support	5.2	1.59	23
Walking the talk	4.8	1.41	39
Pleasing boss vs doing job right	5.8	1.44	6
Management Roles			
Willingness to adjust authority and responsibility	5.1	1.41	30

Survey Item	Group Means	SD	Rank
Willingness to change roles and behaviour	4.8	1.51	38
Manager belief in work approach-individual vs team	4.9	1.47	33
Manager encouragement for growth	5.4	1.33	15
Communication Patterns			
Open Communication			
Freedom to express ideas and concerns	5.3	1.33	19
Clarity of expectations	5.3	1.24	20
Stance toward change	5.4	1.24	16
Trust and Respect			
Personal sense of trust and respect	5.2	1.31	25
Respectful treatment of others	6.2	.79	3
Perceived value of personal opinions	5.3	1.15	21
Organizational Participation			
Planning and Decision making			
Staff input into change	5.3	1.35	18
Staff input into work organization	5.4	1.34	14

Survey Item	Group Means	SD	Rank
Staff involvement in planning for the company's future	4.7	1.65	42
Teamwork			
Presence of team atmosphere	5.6	1.29	9
Atmosphere of shared success	5.2	1.30	26
Suitability of work to team approach	5.6	1.33	8
Cultural support for teamwork and empowerment	5.5	1.20	10
Work approach-individual monitoring vs team contribution and recognition	6.2	1.03	2
Manager willingness to collaborate	5.1	1.44	29
Effective use of special teams	5.0	1.37	31
Teamwork across functional lines	4.9	1.40	34

This survey utilized a seven-point scale. In terms of a measure of central tendency, the overall mean on all items was 5.2. Five items scored at the overall mean with twenty-two items above and twenty-three below.

It was difficult to draw definitive conclusions about this company's overall position in comparison to others because the researcher designed survey had not been used with other organizations. On a seven-point scale, an overall mean of 5.2 would appear to be quite positive. Since none of the combined item scores fell below a mean of 4.3, it would seem that employee perceptions of the company were relatively optimistic.

The five top scoring items confirmed respondent optimism about the company's stance toward teamwork and empowerment in terms of specific organizational characteristics. These items in descending order included the company's willingness to invest in learning, belief in a team based approach to work, individual belief that they treat others with respect, hope for the organization's future and presence of skills to perform duties.

The five items at the other extreme starting with the lowest ranking item included perceived degree of individual authority over decisions, staff commitment to the vision, traditional approach to work as opposed to a team-based one, information timeliness, manager commitment to the vision and impact of the number of layers on job performance.

Another interesting finding emerged in examining the degree of divergence of views within each item. The standard deviation scores indicate a high degree of consensus (SD less than 1.0) on only **two** items which were those dealing with the presence of skills to perform duties and respectful treatment of others. The remaining items indicated varying degrees of agreement which seemed to show that employee opinions differed with respect to the progress the organization had made in terms of participation and empowerment. Barczak et al. (1987) stated that a high degree of alignment among members of an organization needs to exist to transcend traditional operational patterns. Members' divergent views suggested that the affiliation described by Barczak et al. (1987) had not yet been achieved within this organization.

The items on which the highest degree of perception differences occurred (standard deviation of 1.65) concerned participation in vision creation and staff involvement in planning for the company's future. Items with standard deviation scores within the 1.51 to 1.59 range in descending order included manager support, traditional vs team-oriented work organization, impact of the number of layers on job performance, degree of individual authority over decisions, recognition of individual efforts, established ways of celebrating accomplishments and manager willingness to change roles and behaviours. These items were also among the lowest scoring items.

Some interesting trends emerged in examining the results within survey categories. In the items dealing with views of the organization with respect to change, respondents were fairly positive about openness to innovation, but somewhat less confident about its actual support of experimentation and risk taking.

In the shared vision category, only the item dealing with hope for the organization's future emerged with a high mean score (6.0). The remaining items which centred around the existence of a shared vision, participation in its creation and manager and staff commitment to it all resulted in means below

5.0. The latter items were also among the lowest scoring accompanied by a divergence in views, particularly in terms of participation in vision creation which showed a standard deviation score of 1.65.

In terms of organizational structure, results seemed to indicate that respondents perceived this organization still leaning toward a more traditional operational philosophy. The low rank seemed to confirm this view although the standard deviation scores revealed a lower degree of consensus among respondents.

Although the respondents were very positive in varying degrees about the organization's commitment to enhancing the skills necessary to perform their duties, they were not as certain of the company's view of mistakes as learning opportunities. The standard deviation scores indicated that some respondents were more certain than were others. There was a relatively high degree of consensus on the item dealing with the presence of skills to perform duties with a corresponding high rank order.

In the items dealing with independence, respondents perceived that the foundation for individual decision making and initiative existed in terms of job complexity and ownership, but they felt less positive about the support they received for initiative. With respect to individual authority they perceived they had to make job-related decisions, this item resulted in the lowest rank although there was a relatively high degree of perception divergence (SD of 1.53).

Although information and resources appeared to be fairly available, timeliness and ease of resource acquisition seemed to be a concern in the respondents' view. The rank pattern which resulted confirmed these perceptions in that presence and availability resulted in mid range ranks but timeliness and ease of acquisition fell in the bottom third.

In the area of recognition, results seemed to indicate considerable room for improvement although perceptions surrounding team recognition were somewhat more positive. The corresponding ranks confirmed this perception although, once again, views were somewhat divergent.

The items dealing with management commitment presented an interesting variance between belief and action. Although participants indicated their belief in the notion that proper job performance is more important than pleasing their superior and that managers appeared to be committed to the team concept, the resulting means showed that perhaps manager behaviour was not completely congruent with their beliefs. In particular, the item dealing with walking the talk emerged as a problematic area. The item concerning manager support showed a mean score corresponding to the overall mean at 5.2 and a mid range rank of 23 but also resulted in a perception divergence with a standard deviation score of 1.59.

In terms of management roles, group means seemed to show that manager willingness to negotiate role transitions may be somewhat out of step with the beliefs behind the concept of a team-based approach. With the exception of manager encouragement for growth which scored at a 5.4 mean and a rank of 15, the remaining items scored below the overall mean and fell in the bottom third in terms of rank.

The items surrounding open communication showed mean scores slightly above the overall mean and, with the exception of the company's stance toward change, fell in the middle rank scores.

The questions dealing with the trust, respect and value staff received in comparison to the respectful treatment they give others presented an interesting discrepancy. Respondents felt that they gave more trust and respect than they received. Whereas respectful treatment of others ranked third and resulted in the highest degree of consensus among respondents with a standard deviation of .79, personal sense of trust and respect ranked twenty-fifth and showed some variation in views with a standard deviation of 1.31.

In terms of involvement in planning and decision making, staff perceived individual, job-specific involvement in a more positive light than input into future planning for the company. However, there was a considerable lack of consensus on the latter point as evidenced by the highest standard deviation score of 1.65.

In the items dealing with teamwork, group means indicated a fundamental belief in a team-based work approach; respondents were relatively positive about the general presence of a participative atmosphere. Respondents seemed somewhat less positive about specific actions to support this belief such as manager willingness to collaborate, the effective use of special teams and evidence of teamwork across functional lines. These items all ranked in the middle third and showed a fair degree of divergence.

To summarize the results of the survey, Table 4.3 presents the items which fell into the top third according to their rank order as well as those that fell into the bottom third.

TABLE 4.3

High and Low Scoring Items: Rank Order and Group Means

Items in the TOP Third	Rank Order	Group Means
Company's willingness to invest in learning	1	6.2
Work approach-individual vs team	2	6.2
Respectful treatment of others	3	6.2
Hope for the organization's future	4	6.1
Presence of skills to perform duties	5	6.1
Pleasing the boss vs doing job right	6	5.8
Job complexity and decision-making initiative	7	5.6
Suitability of work to team approach	8	5.6
Presence of team atmosphere	9	5.6
Cultural support of teamwork and empowerment	10	5.5
Openness to innovation	11	5.5

Items in the TOP Third	**Rank Order**	**Group Means**
Sense of job ownership	12	5.4
Manager commitment to team concept	13	5.4
Staff input into work organization	14	5.4
Manager encouragement for growth	15	5.4
Stance toward change	16	5.4

Items in the BOTTOM Third		
Participation in vision creation	36	4.8
Recognition of individual efforts	37	4.8
Manager willingness to change roles and behaviour	38	4.8
Walking the talk	39	4.8
Personal sense of recognition	40	4.8
Recognition from managers	41	4.8
Staff involvement in planning for the company's future	42	4.7
Established ways of celebrating accomplishments	43	4.7
Existence of a shared vision	44	4.7
Impact of number of layers on job performance	45	4.6
Manager commitment to the vision	46	4.6
Information timeliness	47	4.6

Items in the BOTTOM Third	**Rank Order**	**Group Means**
Traditional vs team approach to work	48	4.5
Staff commitment to the vision	49	4.4
Degree of individual authority over decisions	50	4.3

Items in the **top** third seemed to support the company's commitment to enhanced employee involvement, respondent belief in the concept and progress in certain specific areas. Items in the **bottom** third tended to illustrate specific areas in which teamwork and empowerment were perhaps not as advanced.

To place those items which fell into the bottom third of the distribution into a context of what empowerment and participative management mean as presented in the literature, the definitions of these terms as described in the introductory chapter of this thesis merit repetition.

> **Empowerment (individual)** -- The process of coming to feel and behave as though one has power to effect change in a significant aspect of one's work as it relates to productivity, motivation and behaviour (Kizlios, 1990).
>
> **Empowerment (organizational)** -- The process of creating an environment of increased employee autonomy, responsibility and authority (Imel, 1982).
>
> **Participative management** -- Shared decision-making which involves managers in a team approach and actively solicits employee input (Chait, 1982).

The following paragraphs examine the item categories which consistently fell into the bottom third in light of these definitions and the related literature:

1. The questions which dealt with independence and organizational structure received comparatively low scores. If one ascribes to the measures of participation and empowerment as employee autonomy, responsibility and authority and shared decision making which actively solicits employee input as described in the above definitions, it would seem that the survey results indicated potential improvement in this area.

2. Barczak et al. (1987) and Kouzes et al. (1989) emphasized the importance of employee participation in the creation of a shared vision. In this study, with the exception of hope for the organization's future, the questions dealing with the notion of a shared vision resulted in low scores which reflected a lower level of participation and involvement than on other items. Demonstrable commitment to the vision on the part of the managers and staff confirmed pessimistic perceptions in this area.

3. Schlesinger et al. (1984) presented the notion of reduced status distinctions traditionally associated with hierarchical relationships. Shonk (1992) suggested that significant gains in organizational performance can be realized through movement **away** from a control-based philosophy in which employees are regulated by managers **to** one which is driven by employee commitment in an atmosphere of participation and empowerment. In this study, with respect to management roles, the only item which scored above the overall group mean involved manager encouragement of staff to grow and develop. Results

indicated perceived room for improvement in terms of managers making the transition from traditional roles to those which support a participative environment as described in the literature and the definitions presented earlier.

4. Wellins et al. (1990) suggested that recognition should be based on team achievements rather than seniority. Kouzes et al. (1989) confirmed this notion. The survey results seemed to affirm this idea. The perceptions regarding recognition practices resulted in only one item which scored above a 4.8 mean -- the recognition of team efforts. In terms of individual recognition, managers looking for ways to recognize staff and established ways of celebrating accomplishments, all means were below 4.8.

5. Wellins et al. (1990) emphasized the importance of viewing information as a shared resource rather than as a source of power. In this study, perceptions on questions dealing with shared information resulted in an apparent contradiction. Although the mean for availability of information was 5.2, the question dealing with receiving information in a timely fashion resulted in a mean of 4.6. The resulting ranks and differences in standard deviation scores confirmed a need for improvement in consistency in the timely sharing of information.

Narrative Comments

Although the majority of the survey instrument was objective in nature, respondents were provided with one page on which they could record narrative comments. Over one-third of the respondents (108 out of 315) used this opportunity to share their thoughts. The total number of **separate** comments identifying both perceived strengths and areas for improvement was 131. The nature of these comments as categorized by an intensive analysis by the researcher is summarized in Table 4.4. These written responses provide further insight into questionnaire outcomes.

TABLE 4.4

Summary of Respondents' Comments

	Perceived Strengths	**Areas for Improvement**
	Number of Comments	**Number of Comments**
View of the Organization		
Change and Innovation	5	5
Shared Vision	0	6
Organizational Structure	0	6
Learning	0	6
How Work is Managed		
Independence	0	3
Shared Information	0	4
Resource Availability	0	4
Recognition	1	18

	Perceived Strengths	Areas for Improvement
	Number of Comments	Number of Comments
Management Practices		
Management Commitment	4	14
Management Roles	0	5
Communication Patterns		
Open Communication	3	1
Trust and Respect	2	6
Organizational Participation		
Planning and Decision-making	0	3
Teamwork	17	18
Total of ALL Comments	**32**	**99**

Of the total of 131 comments, 99 (75%) reflected perceived areas for improvement; the remaining 32 (25%) were of a positive nature and tended to praise the organization for the efforts made toward increased participation and empowerment. It was interesting to note that there were three times as many comments on improvement as on perceived strengths. In examining the nature of these comments, the positive remarks tended to support the organization's commitment to increased participation, while the less positive ideas dealt with how this commitment was exemplified.

Seventeen of the 32 (53%) positive comments concerned the improvements the company had made in recent years. Some of the words that respondents used to highlight their optimism described the company as "progressive, unafraid of change, willing to give employees considerable autonomy and accountability." Fourteen of the respondents expressed appreciation for being invited to participate in the survey and saw it as direct evidence of the company's interest in their viewpoints. Over half of those who shared positive perceptions applauded their own departments for their recognition of employee ability and the accompanying empowerment in their own work settings.

Seventeen respondents felt very positive about the progress the company had made with respect to teamwork and collaboration. They highlighted the fact that all staff needed to work together so as to realize even greater improvements in this area. They made a number of specific suggestions on ways in which this might be achieved:

* There should be an increased emphasis on departments getting to know each other better both in an educational sense as well as a social one. Specific department initiatives were cited as examples, as were corporate educational efforts which were designed to include all staff.

* It was suggested that more frontline and supervisory staff be included in corporate planning activities and special project teams.

* The idea of more deliberate attempts to recognize team successes was also offered as a suggestion.

Many of the improvement comments directly related to the items on the survey which fell into the bottom third of the distribution. Six of the 99 areas of improvement dealt with the notion of a shared vision. The nature of these comments expressed a certain amount of frustration in not having seen the final product. Some felt that it would likely be too vague and difficult for employees to internalize.

Four of the improvement suggestions centred around shared information. These comments revolved around the inconsistent way in which staff obtained information from managers and other internal communication issues such as gossip, late project updates and limited communication with the branch offices.

A number of respondents shared frustrations with the company's recognition practices. Eighteen of the 99 improvement suggestions dealt with this area. Many of the respondents felt that there was "too much emphasis placed on individual recognition and not enough on team successes." In the opinion of some, this leads to "favouritism being shown to individuals which may not be based on ability." Some respondents also felt that even when individuals did make suggestions, they were not always acted on even when the suggestions had a great deal of merit. Errors, however, certainly were noticed. A few respondents identified individual managers who were apparently more adept at recognizing staff than were others. The issue of advancement also emerged as an apparent gray area, which could result in talented people leaving the organization to join those which were better able to meet individual achievement needs.

Nineteen of the 99 improvement comments centred on the organization's management practices. Individual recognition was given to a number of managers with respect to their treatment of staff. Of particular note was that over a third of branch employees who completed the survey commented on the positive atmosphere in their environment largely due to manager behaviour.

Fifteen participants shared individual perceptions of the managers as a group which were less than positive. Some felt that the management level was very political which had a perceived direct impact on manager behaviour toward each other and toward their employees. They felt that managers did not consistently "walk the talk", and as a result, they generated scepticism within staff with respect to concepts such as empowerment and teamwork. Some also felt that a double standard was sometimes present in terms of manager work hours, perceived "perks" and commitment to employee well-being.

Some respondents clarified that their frustrations resided not with the middle management level but with their immediate supervisors. Others suggested that the reverse was the case. Nevertheless, the perceived difficulties at these levels was apparently having a detrimental affect on inter-departmental communications.

Respondents also shared their perspectives on inconsistencies in participation and empowerment within the company. Sixteen individuals suggested that some departments were not as advanced as others on the journey to true participation and teamwork and that this apparent lag had a significant impact on inter-departmental relationships. Over half went on to identify the potential benefits for the company of minimizing turf issues and giving **all** employees as much knowledge as possible about the company and how it operates to enhance their ability to contribute to overall effectiveness.

A number of respondents shared comments which illustrated individual frustrations in areas such as the apparent requirement for suggestions to be shared only in writing, inequitable promotion policies and the potential decrease in career opportunities as the organization flattens. While some felt that the company treated employees well, others did not. Again individual issues emerged such as inconsistent educational opportunities at **all** levels, unproductive daily production reports and the company's gift giving practices. There were also frustrations expressed regarding the organization's propensity for managing worker time in formal ways, the negative aspects of excessive pride, inconsistent ethical standards, too many committees and tension with respect to downsizing and redeployment.

In general, the narrative comments reinforced survey outcomes. The largest number of suggestions for improvement revolved around the areas of recognition, management practices and application of teamwork principles. The largest number of perceived strengths supported the company's overall commitment to participation and empowerment and respondent belief in this notion.

Perception Discrepancies

The literature in the area of participative management highlighted the importance of alignment among all members of an organization. Sinetar (1988) affirmed this significance with reference to pivotal groups within the organization. To address this contention, this study's second research objective was designed to identify statistically significant perception discrepancies among respondent groups within the organization. Specifically, the differences between managers and other employees and head office and branch office staff were identified and analyzed.

To achieve this, respondent group means were compared through the use of a t-test. The results of statistical analyses are presented first for the manager and employee comparisons and then for the head office and branch office comparisons.

Managers and Employees

Table 4.5 presents the items in which manager and other employee perceptions showed statistically significant discrepancies. The means for each respondent category are listed for each of these items. The difference in means is tested by the t-test; statistical significance was established with a two-tailed probability of .05 or less (p-.05).

TABLE 4.5

Manager and Employee Perception Discrepancies

Survey Item	**Manager Means**	**Employee Means**	**Probability**
View of the Organization			
Shared Vision			
Existence of a vision	4.1	4.9	**0.00**
Participation in vision creation	5.1	4.6	**0.04**
Staff Commitment to the vision	3.9	4.5	**0.00**
Organizational Structure			
Impact of number of layers on job performance	4.9	4.4	**0.01**
Learning			
Presence of skills to perform duties	5.8	6.1	**0.02**
How Work is Managed			
Independence			
Personal sense of job ownership	5.8	5.3	**0.00**
Job complexity and decision making initiative	6.4	5.4	**0.00**
Support for initiative	5.5	5.1	**0.01**

Survey Item	Manager Means	Employee Means	Probability
Communication Patterns			
Open Communication			
Freedom to express ideas and concerns	4.9	5.4	**0.02**
Organizational Participation			
Planning and Decision-making			
Staff involvement in planning for the company's future	5.3	4.5	**0.00**
Teamwork			
Suitability of work to team approach	5.9	5.5	**0.04**

Although the perceptions of these two groups showed a high level of congruence in that on thirty-nine out of 50 items the discrepancies could have occurred by chance alone, there were 11 items on which the comparison resulted in statistically significant differences.

It was interesting that although managers felt more involved in the creation of a shared vision than did employees, they were less inclined to perceive the existence of such a vision. Managers were also less positive about staff commitment to the vision than were employees. As shown in the narrative comments, some of the respondents felt a sense of frustration because the results of the process were not yet known and that potentially the vision may be too vague to serve as a direction for all employees.

The two groups had differing perceptions of the effects of the number of organizational layers on job performance. This may be due to the reality that managers do in fact have fewer levels to manoeuvre through than do employees. It may also represent room for growth in terms of how work is designed, distributed and managed.

The presence of skills to perform duties resulted in a significant discrepancy in that employees appeared to feel better equipped to handle their functions than did managers. This could be due in part to the high expectations of managers to deal with issues of a more complex nature. It could also be the result of the availability of internal educational programs for managers. There had been more of an emphasis on developing non-management staff in recent years.

With respect to independence in how work is managed, managers perceived a greater sense of job ownership, a higher level of job complexity and support for initiative than did employees. An interesting discrepancy occurred in the area of job complexity. Managers viewed their jobs as far more complex than did employees. This may be due in part to hierarchically structured compensation systems which support manager function complexity and initiative.

Employees appeared to feel more open in expressing their ideas and concerns than did managers. Although it is difficult to suggest reasons for this discrepancy, it may in fact be indicative of progress from the employee perspective and potential improvement in the managers' views.

In general, managers seemed to feel that they involved staff in planning for the company's future; employees did not share this perception.

Managers also perceived their jobs as better suited to the team approach than did employees. This may be the result of the organization's active and deliberate attempts to involve managers in numerous multi-functional teams. The shared vision process was a good example of such an endeavour. These initiatives did not appear to be moving down into the organization to the extent the literature suggested they could.

Although both groups shared numerous common perceptions, the significant discrepancies signal an opportunity to examine this organization's progress toward participation and empowerment as reflected in the definitions presented earlier in this chapter.

The narrative comments served to provide some insight into the reasons behind the results in that they clarified respondent thoughts surrounding a shared vision, recognition practices, perceptions of managers and differences between departments in terms of participation and empowerment. Additional data were solicited in the next phase of this research in which randomly selected focus group participants were given an opportunity to discuss the possible causes for perception discrepancies.

Head Office and Branch Office Staff

There was a higher degree of agreement between head office and branch office staff than there was between managers and employees. Statistically significant differences emerged in the comparison of only five of the 50 survey items. Table 4.6 presents these items, each group's means and probability scores. In four of the items, the perceptions of branch office staff were more positive than those of head office staff.

TABLE 4.6

Head Office and Branch Office Perception Discrepancies

Survey Item	Head Office Means	Branch Office Means	Probability
View of the Organization			
Shared Vision			
Participation in vision creation	4.7	5.7	**0.01**
How Work is Managed			
Independence			
Job complexity and decision making initiative	5.7	5.1	**0.05**

Survey Item	Head Office Means	Branch Office Means	Probability
Communication Patterns			
Open Communication			
Freedom to express ideas and concerns	5.2	6.0	**0.00**
Trust and Respect			
Personal sense of trust and respect	5.2	5.7	**0.04**
Organizational Participation			
Planning and Decision-making			
Staff input into change	5.3	5.7	**0.03**

The relatively few areas of discrepancy indicated a high degree of congruence between head office and branch office staff. There was certainly greater consensus between these two groups than emerged between managers and employees. The branch office experience of the organization's commitment to teamwork and empowerment seemed to be very similar to that of the head office. Only five of the 50 items resulted in discrepancies which could have occurred by chance alone.

Branch employees felt significantly more involved than did head office employees in creating the vision. Perhaps there was a more concerted, deliberate effort in seeking their input.

Branch employees rated job complexity and decision making initiative significantly lower than did head office employees. A possible explanation for this result could be that the head office group included all but one of the company's managers. The manager respondent group rated complexity fairly high. This discrepancy could also be due to the fact that there were fewer functions represented in the branch offices. They were primarily involved in sales and customer services and depended on the head office to provide the many types of support needed to successfully fulfil these functions. There were also fewer organizational levels represented in the branch offices.

Branch employees perceived their office as more supportive of open communication than did head office employees. This could be due to the fact that many of these offices were very small operations. Even the larger one in southern Alberta had fewer than twenty-five employees.

Branch office staff perceived a greater degree of trust and respect than did head office employees. Similar reasons as were identified for an enhanced sense of open communication could explain this discrepancy as well.

Branch office employee means were higher in terms of staff input into change. As mentioned previously, the narrative comments from the branch offices applauded management efforts in creating a team atmosphere. This combined with the small office sizes could explain why branch office staff felt more involved than did head office staff in the area of change.

The narrative comments shared by branch office staff provided little insight into perception discrepancies other than to acknowledge manager efforts in building a team environment. Data to address reasons for differences were solicited in the next phase of this research during a focus group discussion with branch office representatives.

Analyzing Perception Discrepancies

This study's third research objective was designed to suggest reasons for perception discrepancies between managers and employees and between head office and branch office staff. Eight focus groups were assembled to undertake this task. Seven of these groups consisted of head office staff clustered according to organizational level. One of their specific tasks was to discuss the perception discrepancies between managers and employees. A branch office group discussed differing impressions between head office and branch office employees.

To gather the data for this research objective, focus groups were asked the following questions:

1. What were your overall impressions of the results?
2. What were the reasons for perception similarities?
3. What were the reasons for perception discrepancies?

Manager and Employee Perception Discrepancies

The seven head office focus groups which dealt with this issue were highly interactive and willing to share their ideas. Careful records were kept of group discussions via cassette tapes, assistant notes, session handouts and flipchart documentation. The results of all seven sessions were summarized and priorized by the researcher by cross referencing all data sources and tabulating areas of agreement as well as individual focus group ideas.

1. What were your overall impressions of the results? In response to this question, the following themes emerged.

Six of the seven head office groups pointed out that there were a large number of close scores between managers and employees indicating a high degree of agreement both in terms of positive perceptions and potential areas for improvement. One group expressed surprise that there was so much agreement. This group's members expected more diversity.

Four groups highlighted the score discrepancies on the items dealing with the shared vision. Two groups were particularly surprised at the discrepancy around the existence of the vision. Whereas employee scores were more positive than those of managers on this item, they felt less involved in vision creation than did managers. Another group was quite intrigued by the difference in perceptions in terms of manager and employee commitment to the vision. Members were particularly disappointed by managers' perceptions of employee commitment.

Two groups drew attention to two specific discrepancies they found particularly surprising -- staff involvement in planning for the company's future and willingness to change. They felt that this may be a reflection of differences between departments rather than of negative perceptions of the company as a whole.

Other impressions were unique to individual groups and included:

- The survey's high response rate was evidence of employee willingness to share their opinions;

- The results showed that managers were committed to the team concept;

- One group was surprised that there were so few gaps between group scores;

- Employees expressed a need for more recognition from their managers; and

- Employees appeared to be more open than managers.

2. What were the reasons for perception similarities? In response to this question, the following themes arose.

All seven of the head office focus groups agreed that the company appeared to be truly committed to increased participation and empowerment. These concepts were often discussed with employees in light of the organization's commitment to creating and maintaining a total quality management environment. The groups were unanimous in stating that survey results showed evidence of a cultural shift and the existence of common goals. They also felt that there had been visible actions to support this transition. Examples of these endeavours included the number of internal training programs available to support change efforts, managers' open door policy, improved recognition practices, the trend toward employee involvement in decision-making as opposed to previous top-down approaches and initiatives designed to enhance internal communication.

Four of the seven groups felt that the results reflected satisfaction with the company as a whole. They wondered if the results would have been different had employees responded from the perspective of their individual departments.

Three of the groups felt that survey results reflected increased employee awareness of the company's position in the marketplace. This could account for the high scores both groups gave in terms of hope for the organization's future.

Two groups emphasized that the reasons for so many perception similarities may be due to visible management commitment to teamwork and empowerment, a dedication to change, work environment improvements and the fact that employee opinions were sought with greater frequency.

Other thoughts were unique to individual focus groups and included:

- The current state of the economy is causing increased concern for job security;

- The areas in which there seemed to be a high degree of agreement were those which were more tangible such as the company's investment in learning;

- One group felt that as more front line staff moved up in the organization, understanding increased;

- The results seemed to show that more job responsibility and variety were needed; and

- One group felt that the profile of survey respondents may have impacted the way results turned out since there were a large number of frontline employees who responded.

3. What were the reasons for perception discrepancies? In response to this question, the following thoughts were shared.

Six of the seven head office groups suggested reasons for the discrepancies in scores dealing with shared vision. Two groups felt that survey respondents may have misinterpreted what the term meant because of the number of "visionary" documents which were currently making their way around the company. Two groups pointed out that managers were actively involved in the entire process whereas employees were only invited to participate in portions of it. In their view, involvement leads to commitment. If employees did not feel included, the relatively low score in terms of commitment may be explained. One group felt that employees may be feeling frustrated because of the seemingly long time between the start of the process and evidence of an actual result.

Six of the seven groups discussed the area of manager and employee job complexity quite extensively. Four of these felt that although managers perceived their jobs as more complex, they may not have a clear understanding of employee job intricacies. One group suggested that managers may not realize how much employees actually do help them to succeed in their jobs. Another group interpreted the results to mean that employees felt they had outgrown their jobs and wanted to offer more to the company. Three of the groups suggested that managers needed to trust and listen to their staff more since the employees were the ones who dealt directly with customers.

Three of the groups discussed manager roles. They felt that some managers were still relatively traditional and only empowered staff to execute menial tasks. They viewed staff as replaceable, which may not be the case. Staff would like to grow and develop and take on more responsibility.

Three groups brought up potential differences between individual managers and departments as a reason for perception discrepancies. They felt that in some areas within the company managers were controlling rather than empowering, which may in turn lead to staff bitterness. These groups highlighted inconsistent communication of expectations and information-sharing as examples of the differences among departments.

Three groups discussed the area of staff involvement in planning and decision-making. They suggested that the fact that managers were involved in initiatives such as the shared vision and strategic planning from their inception to conclusion leads to increased awareness and understanding of issues and events. Employees were brought in during specific process phases and as a result felt a lesser degree of involvement, commitment and understanding.

Two groups talked about the number of organizational layers and the stifling effects they had on employees. They felt that this resulted in inconsistent policy interpretation and a sense of secrecy.

Two of the groups discussed the perception discrepancy between managers and other employees in terms of the presence of skills to perform effectively. They felt that in part this could be explained by a possible lack of self-confidence on the part of managers. One group felt that results reflected increased employee willingness to risk and take on additional responsibility.

Individual groups shared unique perspectives on perception discrepancies, including:

- The definition of empowerment is **not** responsibility without authority;
- More front line employees should be included in multi-functional work groups;
- The results showed a company-wide lack of trust in all directions;
- Scores would look different if employees knew each other better; and
- The world is such that there will always be negative people who complain and do not offer solutions.

Head Office and Branch Office Perception Discrepancies

The results of branch office focus group discussions were compiled and a narrative created to convey the findings. The following presentation of the findings appear as they occurred at the session.

There were some operational differences between the branch office group and head office focus groups. Firstly, the branch office group was reluctant to have the session recorded on tape. Their wishes were honoured. Secondly, in the interests of cost, the assistant did not accompany the session facilitator. However, the facilitator kept a detailed record of branch office focus group comments as they emerged via flipchart. Participants' responses to the discussion questions were transcribed directly from these charts.

1. What were your overall impressions of the results? In response to this question, the following themes emerged.

The branch office consisted of a much smaller staff than that of the head office which led to a greater sense of cohesion. In addition, the repetitive nature of many of the jobs performed at the head office reflected more routine and less challenge and could explain why there was a perceived lesser degree of input into change and decision making processes.

The small branch office setting fostered open communication because staff were less concerned about senior management overhearing what they had to say. The net result of this was a close knit group with members who trusted each other. The small size also facilitated more social activities which led to a sense of "family" among members.

The branch office focus group was surprised that branch office staff perceived their input into planning and decision making in a more positive light than did head office employees.

The ongoing rivalry between head office and branch office tended to bring the branch office closer together.

Although branch office staff felt they had more input into bringing issues to discussion than did head office staff, the results from these initiatives were not visible.

2. What were the reasons for perception similarities? In response to this question, the following thoughts were shared.

Branch office focus group participants felt that the large number of items which scored at the midpoint of the seven-point scale could be indicative of a sense of apathy on the part of all employees regardless of their location.

Focus group participants suggested that since there were so many generic items on the survey, scores reflected that office location was not particularly indicative of specific perceptions of the presence of teamwork and empowerment. Participants cited the items dealing with belief in a team based work approach as an example of such an item.

Branch office focus group participants felt that because many of the functions executed in both head office and branch offices were similar, staff may have responded in similar ways to survey items. The sales function was mentioned as an illustration of similar roles.

The company's total quality management initiative was suggested as a reason for the large number of common perceptions shared by head office and branch office employees. This initiative presented a direction and goals for all staff regardless of location. These common goals were apparently espoused by the majority of staff and scores reflected staff commitment to the company and understanding of their responsibilities and duties.

3. What were the reasons for perception discrepancies? In response to this question, the following themes emerged and are presented in the order in which they were discussed.

With respect to staff input into change, branch office focus group participants felt that a larger percentage of staff in their setting actively involved themselves in the change process than did head office employees.

Because the branch office was smaller than head office, increased staff commitment and enhanced communication resulted in a difference in environment. Focus group participants felt that involvement took place without a sense of having to be part of the head office.

In terms of creation of a shared vision, focus group participants felt that although branch office input appeared to be important, the reason for the need for a vision was not clearly communicated. Participants were also somewhat frustrated about the apparent lack of action to date. Their input had been previously solicited on other issues without any visible results. This condition had apparently been repeated in vision creation which led to a certain degree of cynicism and feeling of tokenism.

In discussing job complexity perception differences, branch office focus group participants felt that they were not given sufficient authority to make decisions particularly when out in the field working with customers. This led to a sense of frustration with the resulting inability to address client needs immediately. The customer service function was cited as an example. Group members felt that the presence of a bureaucracy with unnecessary steps made it difficult for staff to take initiative in serving customers better.

In terms of open communication, focus group participants felt that if the survey were to be repeated at this point, branch office scores would be lower in this area as well as on the item which dealt with trust and respect. The job security situation was cited as the potential cause for a tentative and cautious approach which was not in evidence when the survey was administered.

With respect to planning and decision making, branch office focus group participants highlighted the difference between being asked for input and seeing the results of their suggestions.

Change Strategy Suggestions

The final research objective centred around gathering suggestions for potential change strategies. The same focus groups were used to assemble the data in response to four discussion questions:

1. What are the current team-oriented initiatives that the company is involved in?

2. How well are they working?

3. What **four** general change strategies in priority order would you suggest that the company initiate to further its commitment to teamwork and empowerment?

4. What specific implementation activities would you suggest the company undertake to support each change strategy?

Head Office Groups

1. What are the current team-oriented initiatives that the company is involved in? In response to this question, the following themes emerged.

Four of the seven head office groups identified the company's annual general assembly to which all staff are invited as the event which most reflects the company's commitment to sharing information.

Three groups listed the following initiatives as indicative of the commitment to teamwork and empowerment:

- The shared vision process;

- Total quality management related initiatives such as department quality circles and the corporate service quality facilitators' network;

- The availability of training programs; and

- The survey and focus groups supporting the company's research into participation and empowerment.

Two groups indicated that the following team-oriented activities were important:

- Specific initiatives such as the modification of the dress code policy, management and department planning retreats, improved recognition, the weekly employee newsletter, the improvement of the company's staff association and the wellness program;

- Increased use of multi-functional and multi-level problem-solving teams; and

- Increased information sharing on the part of the managers.

Individual groups added the following to the list of team-oriented initiatives:

- Employment security program;
- Increased company-wide information on impending changes;
- Evidence of a flattening organizational structure; and
- Increased management visibility.

2. How well are these team-oriented initiatives working? In terms of the visible results of these team-oriented endeavours, the following themes emerged through focus group discussions.

Four groups felt there had in fact been evidence of improved internal communication and cited the increase in feedback opportunities, better staff rapport and enhanced internal communication vehicles as tangible results of these enhancements.

Three groups felt the benefits of training programs were becoming increasingly visible.

Three groups felt the company had indeed made a start but the results were hard to judge since some departments were well ahead of others.

Two groups felt the company's atmosphere was more informal and friendly and trust and respect were growing.

Two groups felt that although the shared vision exercise was designed to solicit employee input, it had been a slow process without a visible result to date.

Two groups cited several examples of manager commitment to the team concept including allowing staff to do more, listening to their concerns and ideas more often and residing in the areas they managed. They also felt managers were less of a blockade to the executive than they used to be.

Individual groups added the following to the list of visible enhancements as a result of team-oriented initiatives:

- Lower turnover;
- More long term staff;
- Increased front line staff confidence in contributing to decision-making; and
- Better informed staff.

Individual groups also shared some concerns with respect to these initiatives:

- Some of the initiatives were not widely known;

- Job uncertainty had detrimental effects regardless of the commitment to increased participation and empowerment;

- A comprehensive total quality management plan was lacking;

- Although staff were asked to share their opinions, what results from them doing so was often unclear; and

- Improvement was needed in terms of what was recognized and how.

3. What four general change strategies in priority order would you suggest that the company initiate to further its commitment to teamwork and empowerment?

4. What specific implementation activities would you suggest the company undertake to support each change strategy?

Table 4.7 presents the results of the seven head office focus group responses to these questions. The researcher cross referenced and tabulated data from all of the sources used to record group session discussions. The change strategies were then rank ordered according to the number of groups that generated each strategy. The number of groups that suggested a particular strategy is indicated in brackets for each. Implementation suggestions represent a compiled list of all ideas across focus groups.

TABLE 4.7

Change Strategies and Implementation Suggestions

Head Office Focus Groups

Change Strategy	Implementation Suggestions
Foster teamwork consistently (all seven groups)	
* within departments	*Team skills development *Resolution of manager lack of time issue *Provision of timely, consistent information *Active manager participation in department meetings *Two-way performance appraisals
* among departments	*Cross-functional process analysis *Reorganize around projects rather than around departments *Managers switch departments for a week *Increased job sharing and job rotation *Formal, scheduled opportunities to learn about other departments *Staff-initiated open houses *Mixed representation at meetings

Change Strategy	**Implementation Suggestions**
Foster teamwork consistently (all seven groups) cont'd	
*among levels	*Multi-level problem-solving teams which are educated and urged to share their progress *Increase opportunities for executive-staff dialogue *Manager-employee role reversal for a day *Supervisor-employee role reversal for a day
Improve recognition practices (six groups)	*Promote the concept *Improve rewards by making them more tangible *Report ideas that have been implemented *Enhance recognition for project teams *Evaluate current suggestion programs *Acknowledge **all** improvement-oriented actions so that they are repeated *All levels to show appreciation for **all** levels *Off-site team days *Individual recognition such as "employee of the month" *Eliminate/modify perfect attendance award

Change Strategy	Implementation Suggestions
Increase employee responsibility and empowerment (two groups)	*Delegate appropriate responsibility, authority and accountability *Mistrust should not be based on level within the organization but on individual, specific deficiencies *Recognize that not all staff want more responsibility and accountability
Involve staff in planning decision making (two groups)	*Department planning *Increased staff involvement in employee benefit decisions *Increased two-way input into changes that affect jobs *Continue to ask for staff opinions but also share results
Remove us vs them syndrome (one group)	*Equitable access to parking, equipment and furniture *Consistent application of the open door policy
Enhance use of existing communication vehicles (one group)	*More flexibility for staff to feel free to participate in training programs and seminars *Use weekly employee newsletter to give updates on issues such as the employment security program

Change Strategy	Implementation Suggestions
Lead by example (one group)	*Manager consistency in walking the talk *Managers should be the first in line for training programs *Increased manager visibility *Improved communication between executive and middle managers
Enhance educational opportunities (one group)	*Management skills training *Cross training program *More information on external training programs
Improve performance appraisal process (one group)	*Eliminate numerical ratings unless they are truly needed for salary increases *Ensure consistent measures *Increased staff involvement throughout the entire process
Improve working conditions (one group)	*Flexible hours *Staff should pay less for benefits *Improved salary increases

Branch Office Group

1. What are the current team-oriented initiatives that the company is involved in? In response to this question, only one response emerged. Focus group participants felt that more needed to be done in this area for the branch offices to enhance the spirit of teamwork.

2. How well are these team-oriented initiatives working? In response to this question, the following thoughts were shared.

The impact of the annual general assembly could be enhanced if the president allowed time for individual meetings with staff in the branch offices, thereby making this event more meaningful for staff in the branches.

With respect to initiatives such as shared vision creation, discussion centred around following input with action and results.

3. What four general change strategies in priority order would you suggest that the company initiate to further its commitment to teamwork and empowerment?

4. What specific implementation activities would you suggest the company undertake to support each change strategy?

Table 4.8 presents the results of this discussion which were transcribed as they were presented.

TABLE 4.8

Change Strategies and Implementation Suggestions

Branch Office Group

Change Strategy	Implementation Suggestions
Encourage action based on customer needs	*Increase authority to act on needs in a timely manner
Acknowledge that staff represent the company to customer	*Recognize the responsibility and importance of branch office functions and compensate accordingly
Encourage innovation and creativity	*Increase decision making authority *Decrease risk associated with making mistakes *Recognize that career progression within the company is limited and enhance empowerment and compensation
Enhance trust in staff	*Reduce bureaucracy *Recognize staff efforts in meeting client needs

The Focus Group Experience

Chapter Three presented areas deserving of special attention in using focus groups, particularly within the context of this study. These considerations centred around issues such as freedom of expression, researcher bias and session organization. Because the researcher in this instance was in a participant observer role and a resident of the sponsoring organization, it seemed essential to determine whether or not these circumstances had a detrimental effect on participants and caused the results of the discussion to come into question in any way.

In an attempt to determine whether any of these potential pitfalls affected the study, the researcher asked focus group participants to complete a brief feedback sheet. There were five objective questions which used a five-point scale in which "1" represented a highly negative perception and "5" a highly positive one. There was also an open-ended question which allowed respondents to share their perceptions on the potential usefulness of their input in narrative form. This simple instrument is included in Appendix C. Of the sixty feedback sheets that were distributed, thirty-four were returned. Table 4.9 summarizes the results of this activity.

TABLE 4.9

FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK SUMMARY

Item	Mean
In general, I found my session to be beneficial.	3.3
The agenda used to guide the session was appropriate.	3.5
I was able to share my ideas freely.	3.9
The facilitator seemed to be objective.	4.5
I thought the organization of the session was effective.	3.9

The results of this feedback activity indicated that overall impressions of the focus group experience were positive and that the researcher had paid sufficient attention to the cautions raised by the researchers in the area of focus group organization and operation. In particular, the researcher was concerned about the effect of the participant observer role on focus groups participant perceptions of facilitator objectivity. The resulting mean of 4.5 out a possible 5.0 confirmed that participants were not intimidated by this condition.

Participants were also given the opportunity to make open-ended comments in terms of whether or not they felt that the feedback they gave at their session would result in positive change. Twenty-four of the respondents emphasized the positive experiences they had during their focus group session. These comments centred around appreciation of having been included, the informal, open and honest atmosphere, sharing thoughts with people from other departments, smooth operation of the session, brainstorming activities, facilitator objectivity and experience in group dynamics and supporting worksheets and flipcharts. One participant applauded the cultural shift the company had made from an environment in which no one felt free to speak out to one which encouraged employee input into critical organizational issues.

Three respondents shared constructive suggestions for improvement. The main concern revolved around the limited time focus groups were given to engage in guided discussion. Two participants recorded their thoughts on the presence of a tape recorder and its inhibiting effects on their participation.

Although the feedback sheets were completed by just over half of the participants, the outcomes seemed to indicate that the concerns raised in Chapter Three were sufficiently addressed in this study and that possible detrimental effects were minimized.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of two distinct research phases. The first phase involved quantitative data collection through a researcher designed survey and described the perceived degree of empowerment by all staff within a selected organization and identified perception discrepancies by organizational level and office location. The second research phase espoused a qualitative approach by forming focus groups to analyze perception similarities and discrepancies, list and assess the impact of existing team oriented initiatives and suggest change strategies and supporting implementation activities to further the sponsoring organization's commitment to participation and empowerment.

The study yielded quantitative data which revealed the organization's strengths, suggested areas for improvement and identified specific areas in which managers and other employees as well as head office and branch office staff were not in alignment. Based on an analysis of quantitative results, focus group participants described organizational conditions which both supported and negated alignment and identified specific ways in which the organization could realize further improvement in empowering its staff and including them in company planning and decision making processes.

In general, research activities yielded a number of interesting outcomes. Survey results highlighted differences between belief and action in that the items related to organizational and staff commitment to the notions of teamwork and empowerment scored higher than many of the items that dealt with translation of belief into action. Although there were a number of items which indicated consensus among employees, there were areas which resulted in differing views. There were a larger number of perception discrepancies between managers and other employees than there were between head office and branch office staff. The overall reasons for perception discrepancies tended to revolve around apparent inequities in which teamwork and empowerment were acted upon across the company and the need for more responsibility and authority to perform job functions. Potential change strategies addressed specific ways in which teamwork and empowerment could be fostered to further the organization's commitment to participative management.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter Five begins with a summary of the study -- its purpose and objectives, the methodology, data analyses and the major findings. The chapter also contains a discussion of the conclusions, implications and recommendations resulting from the study. The conclusions and implications are portrayed in terms of the organizational literature in the area of participation and empowerment. The recommendations suggest specific actions for the selected organization, for other organizations and for future research both with respect to participative management and research methodologies.

Summary

This summary begins with a description of the economic conditions driving organizations to espouse a participative management approach. Within this context, the nature of this study is described, how it was conducted and the findings that emerged during the research process.

Increasingly organizations are challenged to enhance their competitiveness in the global marketplace. A vast amount of research has been conducted into the success of countries such as Japan in meeting these challenges. These studies have affirmed that the shift from bureaucracy to participation and empowerment is a critical factor in strengthening competitiveness. They have also shown that both the organization and its employees experience benefits from such a transformation. A positive correlation has been established between participative decision-making and job satisfaction (Wheeless, 1982). Semler (1989) cited increased productivity and quality, greater job satisfaction, improved customer service and decreased waste as benefits for organizations committed to greater employee involvement. Baloff et al. (1989) added reduced resistance to change, enhanced creative problem-solving and increased organizational effectiveness to the list of potential benefits.

The literature described the movement toward increased participation as a journey and not a one-time decision by an organization. The importance of continually measuring progress along the path to enhanced staff involvement in decision-making was emphasized as critical to the introduction and subsequent assessment of change interventions (Shonk, 1992).

The literature also highlighted the critical role of managers in the transition as they abandon practices designed to maintain control-based, bureaucratic organizations in favour of participative approaches (Byrd, 1987).

Purpose

This study explored the perceived degree of empowerment within a selected organization and analyzed perception discrepancies by organizational level and office location. It also solicited reasons for perception discrepancies and suggestions for future change strategies.

Research Objectives

To address the study's purpose, this research was designed to:

1. Describe the degree of empowerment within an organization as perceived by staff members on a set of organizational characteristics;
2. Compare perceptions between managers and other employees and between head office and branch office staff;
3. Solicit reasons for perception discrepancies; and
4. Gather suggestions with respect to potential change strategies.

Methodology

This study combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies to address the research objectives. The first two objectives revolved around gathering data on perceptions of the degree of empowerment within an organization and isolating perception discrepancies between respondent groups. A researcher designed fifty-item survey based on literature in the area of participation and empowerment was used to collect perceptions of staff members within the organization. Statistical analyses were performed to determine the significance of perception discrepancies between specified groups.

The remaining objectives involved identifying reasons for perception differences and suggesting change strategies to further the organization's journey toward increased participation and empowerment. Stratified random selection was used to form focus groups to consider and discuss questions designed to address these objectives.

Data Analyses

The SPSS program was used to analyze survey data to address the first research objective. Sample means for each questionnaire item were calculated. Means were then rank ordered to provide a summary of the respondents' perceptions of the organization in terms of employee involvement.

To identify the statistically significant perception discrepancies between respondent groups, means were compared through the use of a t-test. Items which were significant at the .05 level were identified for managers and other employees and for head office and branch office staff.

Focus group data to suggest reasons for perception discrepancies and to identify potential change strategies were collected by the researcher. For the seven head office groups which addressed perception discrepancies between managers and other employees, raw data were compiled and summarized to reflect the overall conclusions reached by focus group participants. These suggestions were then priorized and rank ordered according to the number of groups who suggested particular reasons or change strategies. For the head office-branch office grouping, only one focus group was conducted and the findings were presented as suggested by this group.

Findings

In terms of the first research objective which involved describing the degree of empowerment as perceived by all staff, the overall mean for all items was 5.2 with twenty-two items above the mean, five items at the mean and twenty-three items below the mean. Whether the scores were favourable in terms of the larger business environment was difficult to determine since the survey instrument had only been used in one organization to date. Nevertheless, an overall mean of 5.2 out of a possible 7.0 would appear to be fairly positive.

In general, those items which resulted in higher mean scores tended to reflect employee belief in the concept of increased participation and the organization's commitment to it. Specific support to employee and organizational dedication in the form of willingness to invest in learning resulted in the highest mean score (6.2).

Some interesting discrepancies between commitment and action emerged. Whereas the groups shared positive perceptions about the company's openness to innovation, they were somewhat less positive about its encouragement of experimentation and risk taking. With respect to learning, although company willingness to invest in learning scored at a 6.2 mean and the presence of skills to perform duties yielded a 6.0, the company's treatment of mistakes as learning opportunities resulted in a mean of 5.1. In terms of independence, results were positive with respect to job complexity, ownership and initiative, but actual authority over decisions resulted in the lowest overall mean (4.3). Although information and resources appeared to be fairly available, timeliness and ease of acquisition seemed to be a concern. With respect to management practices, commitment to the team concept and manager support were fairly evident, but specific items dealing with manager role transitions resulted in lower scores. Respondents also perceived that they gave more trust and respect than they received. Although respondents appeared fairly positive about the existence of a team atmosphere and the cultural support for it, they were less favourable in their views of action in this regard as reflected in means of 5.0 and 4.9, respectively, in response to items dealing with effective use of special teams and teamwork across functional lines.

Those items which scored above the aggregate mean of 5.2 showed that, in general, employees favoured a team-based approach over a traditional, bureaucratic one and that doing the job well was more important than pleasing a superior.

Those items which scored closer to the overall mean displayed some movement along the path to increased participation and empowerment. These items included the company's openness to change and innovation, staff input into change and work organization, job ownership and complexity and suitability of work to the team approach, manager commitment to the team concept and encouragement for staff growth and open communication.

Those items which scored below the overall mean revolved around particular ways in which to enhance participation and empowerment. The creation of and commitment to a shared vision of the preferred future and staff involvement in planning for the company's future resulted in comparatively low means. The response to items dealing with organizational structure in terms of number of layers and authority over decisions seemed to show that this organization tended to espouse a more traditional operational approach. Other areas which resulted in lower overall means included recognition practices, manager role transitions and the use of special teams and teamwork across functional lines.

The second research objective was designed to determine the degree of alignment among respondent groups. This research component identified perception discrepancies between managers and other employees and between head office and branch office staff.

Significant differences between managers and other employees were found in several areas:

1. With respect to the shared vision, other employees were more positive than managers about its existence, but managers felt they had been more involved in its creation;

2. There was a significant discrepancy between managers and other

employees in terms of staff commitment to the vision. Managers' perceptions were less positive than those of other employees;

3. In terms of the number of organizational layers and the resulting effect on performance, other employees appeared to be more influenced than were managers;

4. On the items dealing with independence, other employees experienced less job ownership and perceived their jobs to be insufficiently complex to allow for decision-making. They also felt significantly less support for initiative than did managers;

5. Other employees perceived that they had greater freedom to express their ideas and concerns than did managers;

6. Managers felt more involved in planning for the company's future than did other employees; and

7. Managers perceived their jobs to be more suitable to the team approach than did other employees.

The significant discrepancies which emerged between head office and branch office staff included:

1. Branch office employees felt more involved than did head office employees in the creation of a shared vision;

2. Head office employees perceived their jobs to be more complex than did branch office staff;

3. Branch office staff seemed to experience a higher sense of openness and freedom to express ideas and concerns;

4. Branch office employees perceived a greater personal sense of trust and respect than did head office employees; and

5. Branch office staff perceived they had more input into change than did head office employees.

The third research objective centred around suggesting reasons for perception discrepancies. Focus groups were asked to share their overall response to the results and possible reasons for perception similarities and discrepancies.

The seven head office focus groups which dealt with manager-employee comparisons shared the following reactions to the results in general:

1. There were a large number of items on which the groups agreed;

2. The discrepancies in items dealing with the shared vision were of concern; and

3. There were some unexpected differences which may reflect differences among individual departments.

In terms of reasons for perception similarities, head office focus groups suggested the following:

1. The results indicated evidence of the company's commitment to participation and empowerment;

2. The results reflected increased employee awareness of the company's position in the marketplace;

3. Survey scores showed that employees were satisfied with the company as a whole; and

4. The results reflected evidence of manager commitment to increased participation and empowerment.

With respect to reasons for perception differences, the head office groups suggested the following:

1. The items dealing with the shared vision may indicate a misinterpretation of the term or perhaps a sense of frustration with the length of time the process has taken without visible results. Results also showed that managers felt more involved than did employees;

2. Managers' perceptions of employee jobs and of the staff themselves seemed to indicate that some managers had not yet made the role transition that employees might expect in an environment of participation and empowerment;

3. The results likely reflected differences among departments. Some were more traditional and control-oriented, whereas others were moving toward a more participative state. Employees felt the differences and the results may be demonstrating a sense of frustration and bitterness;

4. Some managers may not truly understand how complex employee jobs really were;

5. Managers were in fact more actively involved in planning for the company's future and, as a result, they had more background on the progress of all initiatives; and

6. The number of layers stifled employees and led to inconsistent policy interpretation.

One focus group dealt with perception differences between head office and branch office staff. Their overall reactions to the results were:

1. The small size of the branch offices contributed to a greater sense of cohesion;

2. A higher number of head office jobs were repetitive and unchallenging in comparison with branch office jobs;

3. Branch office focus group participants were surprised that head office scores were lower in planning and decision making input;

4. The rivalry between head office and branch office staff served to further increase cohesion; and

5. Branch office staff were less reluctant to initiate issue discussion than were head office employees but their expectations for results had not been met.

The branch office focus group felt that the reasons for perception similarities included:

1. The relatively large number of mid-range scores could be indicative of general employee apathy;

2. The generic items in the survey were not a function of office location;

3. Similar functions were represented in both head and branch offices;

4. The organization's commitment to total quality management resulted in similar goals for all staff regardless of location; and

5. Results indicated that staff were committed to the company and were aware of what they had to do to ensure its continued success.

Branch office focus group participants offered the following as possible reasons for perception discrepancies:

1. A higher percentage of branch office staff actively sought opportunities to provide input into change;

2. The differences in environments between head office and branch office fostered increased staff commitment and communication;

3. Although branch office staff felt involved in creating the organization's shared vision, they were less clear on the purpose of the exercise. They expressed a sense of impatience in not seeing the results of their input as yet;

4. With respect to job complexity, branch office focus group participants felt that they were not given enough authority to make decisions in the best interests of the company's clients. They cited bureaucracy as a reason for this perceived lack of authority;

5. Although survey results showed a greater sense of openness and freedom to share ideas and concerns among branch office staff than among head office employees, focus group participants wondered whether similar

results would emerge should the survey be administered again at this point. Decreased job security was given as a possible reason for a possible decrease in openness; and

6. Although branch office scores reflected more involvement in planning and decision making than did head office scores, branch office focus group participants expressed concern about not seeing the results of their input into organizational activities other than the shared vision exercise.

The fourth research objective involved gathering potential change strategy suggestions. To open this discussion, manager and other employee focus groups were asked to list the organization's existing team-oriented initiatives and to identify perceived results. The sheer number of events and the subsequent benefits that emerged seemed to indicate a belief that the commitment to teamwork and empowerment existed and that it was being acted upon.

All seven head office focus groups were asked to suggest change strategies which would further the organization's progress toward a participative state. The researcher compiled all of the suggestions and priorized them according to the number of groups who supported each recommendation. The following change strategies were identified by focus group participants:

1. Foster teamwork:
    - within departments

  - among departments
  - among levels;

2. Improve recognition practices;

3. Increase employee responsibility; and

4. Actively involve employees in planning and decision-making.

Numerous specific implementation suggestions were generated to support each change strategy.

The branch office focus group generated the following potential change strategies:

1. Encourage action based on customer needs;

2. Acknowledge that staff represent the company to the customer;

3. Encourage innovation and creativity; and

4. Enhance trust in staff.

Conclusions

The following conclusions emanate from an examination of the research findings and are discussed in relation to the literature in the area.

Organizational Commitment

The organization selected for this study has adopted a commitment to increased employee participation and empowerment to increase effectiveness. It would appear that this commitment has been communicated to and accepted by employees. Survey results and subsequent focus group discussions confirm the company's commitment to total quality management and its implications for employee involvement in all aspects of the operation. Total quality management, as described by Clemmer (1992), has been adopted by this organization with its accompanying emphasis on increased participation in decision-making both at the organizational level and the performance of individual jobs.

The company has initiated several enhancements in an attempt to move toward a participative environment.

The Role of the Manager

This study reinforced the critical role that managers play in organizational transition toward increased participation. Barczak et al. (1987) discussed the importance of manager willingness to transcend traditional operational patterns. They also presented the notion of a high degree of alignment among all members of an organization as critical to the ability to progress along the path toward participation and empowerment. This study attempted to determine the extent to which alignment exists in a selected organization and the progress managers have made toward enhanced employee involvement. The results showed that this organization's managers have made some progress, but employees anticipate further change and expressed clear ideas on what should happen to increase the degree of alignment.

Employee Expectations

The literature indicated that employees want increased responsibility and authority and would like to be more involved in the operation of an organization. This study confirmed this expectation and actively involved employees in suggesting strategies for moving toward this desired state.

Improvement Strategies

The survey component of this study clearly identified potential improvement areas for the selected organization to consider. The employees involved in the focus group phase identified specific change strategies to support the organization's movement along the path to increased employee involvement.

Process and Contextual Framework

The literature in the areas of participative management emphasized the need for a framework within which to operate as the commitment to empowerment unfolds. The researcher adopted a slightly modified version of the process model developed by Kilmann (1989). The data needs and elements related to the framework's process phases were derived by the researcher through the synthesis of a number of sources in the area of participative management. These activities resulted in a process and context framework to guide the transition process. This study focused on the **diagnose** and **plan** components of this framework with numerous benefits. In addition to describing and analyzing perceptions of the current state of participation and empowerment within the organization, a number of ideas were generated to help the organization engage in the **plan** component of this process. This was achieved in a way which was congruent with the principles underlying participative management. Employees at all levels were actively involved in analyzing survey results and suggesting specific strategies and implementation suggestions which they believed could advance the organization on its journey toward enhanced employee involvement.

Blending Methodologies in Studying Organizational Issues

This study combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies to gather the research data. This research strategy was selected because of the nature of the organizational issue chosen for the study. The researcher adopted a research approach which modelled the principles of participation and empowerment. The survey component of the study gave an entire organization an opportunity to comment on the company's progress toward increased participation. The focus groups facilitated staff members to contribute to charting a course for the organization's future.

The results of the quantitative investigation yielded data which addressed the first two research objectives by providing perceptions of the progress this organization had made and by identifying perception discrepancies where respondent groups were not aligned with each other.

Qualitative data techniques yielded an analysis of perception similarities and differences and identified specific change strategies. Perhaps the most significant outcome of this research component was the enthusiasm of focus group members and their dedication to continuous improvement.

Implications

This research has implications in a number of areas. The design was based on current literature in the area of participative management and served to examine current thinking on this issue. Although the methodology and supporting documentation were combined for the first time in this study, several potential contributions in terms of practical applications were identified. This potential combined with the insights gained in combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies also have implications for future research.

The implications are discussed in terms of the current literature and the relevance for the sponsoring organization and other organizations.

Support for Current and Future Related Research

The literature leaves little room for doubt that the transition toward increased employee involvement is inevitable. From the point of view of the members of the selected organization, the results revealed a belief in and commitment to teamwork and empowerment. The employees' perspective confirmed a general belief in the value of staff participation and empowerment and staff dedication to the concept.

The organizational characteristics described in the literature reviewed for this study appeared to be all-encompassing. These factors were reflected in the survey designed for this research. Respondents did not add any factors to the ones that were included in the questionnaire.

The transition that the literature urged managers to make appeared to be valid. Survey results and focus group discussions did not show any indication of respondent preference for a more traditional management approach. On the contrary, suggestions emerged which, if implemented, would involve managers in multiple transitional activities.

Practical Applications for the Sponsoring Organization

The organization selected for this study had made a commitment to participative management and empowerment within a total quality management context and had initiated tangible interventions to support this decision. Both the survey results and the focus group conclusions showed that staff members had experienced positive outcomes as a result of these initiatives.

The outcomes of the study reinforced the view of participation and empowerment as a journey. The research approach allowed opportunities for respondents to comment on the past, present and future. Participants were given three opportunities to express their views, including the objective instrument itself, provision for narrative comments and in focus group discussions. The resulting narrative comments and focus group ideas emphasized that the organization had indeed advanced along the path toward teamwork in recent years. The focus groups, in particular, facilitated the generation of improvement recommendations, suggesting that there was indeed room for further growth. This study also supported the notion of alignment among organizational members. This was evidenced by the fact that the survey results were certainly not uniform, indicating positive growth in some areas and potential enhancements in others. There were significant perception discrepancies among respondent groups. The focus group component of the study proposed reasons for perception divergences and suggested ways to improve those areas in which survey outcomes indicated potential room for positive growth.

The study's results confirmed that there had indeed been progress made in terms of manager role transitions as emphasized in the literature. They also indicated, however, areas which needed further mobilization.

Perhaps the most significant ramifications of the study for the sponsoring organization were the employee-generated suggestions for future change that emanated from focus group discussions. The suggested change strategies were not created as a result of intuition but from a thorough discussion of survey outcomes. The proposed transformational approaches were also supported by specific implementation ideas from which the organization could draw.

Practical Applications for Other Organizations

The literature reviewed for this study strongly recommended that organizations need to move in the direction of increased participation in a planned and deliberate manner. The underlying premise is that transition is a developmental process and not a one-time event. A verbal commitment alone does not create a participative culture. Belief must be supported by action. This study's outcomes confirmed this premise in that survey items related to belief in the concept scored higher than those indicating specific action. This theme exhibited itself in the **initiate** phase of the framework adopted for this study.

The literature also suggested that organizations need to undertake a thorough assessment of progress toward a more participative state. This spawned the **diagnose** component of the process model. The survey designed to support this phase incorporated the organizational characteristics suggested by researchers into an instrument that could be used as a way to assess progress toward participative management. The qualitative component of the research approach which actively sought employee input also provided a way to scrutinize survey results and to identify needs-based change strategies for future development to support the **plan**, **implement** and **evaluate** process phases. Although the instruments used in this study did not undergo formal validation, with further scrutiny they could be useful to others to gauge their progress along the path toward enhanced participation and empowerment.

Blending Methodologies to Study Organizational Issues

The blended approach used to explore the issue of enhanced participation and empowerment was built on the premise of the value of employee entry into organizational decision making processes. In this study, positive outcomes resulted in terms of the findings as well as modelling a commitment to staff involvement.

The survey component highlighted the importance of utilizing an instrument based on current research in the area to facilitate the description of an organization's progress toward increased participation and empowerment. The intent of such an activity is to describe a culture rather than to evaluate it. Although it was difficult to place this study's results in perspective in terms of where this company stands in relation to others, it was valuable in providing a starting point for future assessment initiatives. It will still, however, not be possible to evaluate progress in comparison with others until the instrument is tested and validated in other organizations.

The focus groups used in this study were particularly useful in providing an opportunity for participants to share perceptions of survey results and to suggest change strategies based on the groups' discussions. The discussion process was highly supportive of this study's objectives.

Recommendations

Several recommendations, both for the selected organization and for other organizations on the journey toward increased participation, emerged from this study as did opportunities for further research.

Actions for the Sponsoring Organization

The results of this study offer the selected organization an opportunity to engage in concentrated dialogue which embody participative principles:

1. The results could be discussed **within individual departments** in terms of how the outcomes relate to what is happening in their areas. Since the technological support needed to analyze results exists within the company, departments could repeat the survey and compare their results to those of the total organization. It would be absolutely critical to exercise extreme sensitivity in determining whether the culture supported such an activity. Without repeating the survey, a general discussion of only this study's outcomes could nevertheless be of great benefit. If repeating the survey in the manner described appeared to be possible, extreme caution should be exercised to protect respondent anonymity, particularly in smaller departments;

2. The results could be used to facilitate discussion **across departments**. This could be achieved in at least a couple of ways. Firstly, the company's management team could consider the implications for potential corporate initiatives to enhance participation and empowerment. This activity alone would be beneficial. Secondly, combined department meetings could use the results to discuss relationships with each other. As a discussion guide, a

modified version of the questions used during the focus group component of this study could be used to facilitate such events. Once again, if a sufficiently supportive climate existed and appropriate cautions were taken to protect participants, repeating the survey and comparing outcomes could be a useful exercise.

3. The results could facilitate discussions **across organizational levels**. Once again, the management team offers a good starting point for these dialogues. The capacity to further analyze this study's outcomes utilizing a more detailed organizational level breakdown exists within the company. In addition, the sponsoring organization has other communication vehicles at its disposal to share multi-level reactions to the outcomes, including an annual general assembly, a weekly employee newsletter and the formation of multi-level problem-solving teams. Any of these suggested activities should be approached very carefully in that they could lead to competitiveness and decreased teamwork. The potential existence of these conditions needs to be carefully assessed in order to minimize the risk of introducing adverse reactions to the study's results if used in this fashion.

4. There was one area which the researcher found of particular interest when comparing manager and other employee survey results; it involved the groups' scores on independence items. Although there was a significant discrepancy in the questions dealing with job complexity, ownership and support for initiative, there was not a similar difference in terms of individual

authority over decisions. A discussion with managers in particular on this item where a discrepancy might have been expected could be advisable. Although reasons for this could be postulated in terms of the notions presented in the literature, the researcher hesitates to state that they "caused" this interesting perception similarity.

Since this study identified specific change strategies and supporting implementation suggestions, the organization is now in a position to activate them. The employee generated ideas could be discussed in terms of what the company should keep doing, to which of the change ideas have commitments already been made and, of those remaining, which could be implemented in the near future.

The results have provided an occasion for the company to move into the **plan** and **implement** phases of the process framework designed for this study. This movement poses interesting challenges. It is clear both from this study's outcomes and the literature in the area of participative management that managers have a critical role to play in furthering the organization's progress on the chosen path. The literature reviewed for this study introduced the notion that active change agents are essential in supporting mangers and employees on this journey.

The organization selected for this study has a thriving human resource development department which has begun to make the transition described by the literature and is currently supporting both individual and organizational development. This study was initiated in this area. In discussing research results, the organization could determine the nature of the role to be played by this department in supporting managers and employees in launching the changes suggested by the outcomes.

Actions for Other Organizations

The framework designed for this study, the supporting research approach and accompanying instruments are ready for additional use. To increase the value of these materials, a larger data base is needed. Although the data collected in this study have provided a way for the sponsoring organization to engage in future diagnostic activities, there is no existing way for the company to determine its position in relation to other organizations with respect to participation and empowerment.

Future Research

This study has implications for future research in the following areas:

1. The researcher designed survey was limited in use to one organization. Although it was subjected to a stringent feedback process involving individuals from organizations similar to the one used in this study, an internal survey resource group and a focus groups consisting of company employees, it was not validated by experts in the field. Since the instrument has the potential to contribute to eventual data base expansion, it would be

worthwhile to subject it to such a review as well as to test it in other organizations.

2. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies was successful in allowing the sponsoring organization to explore participation and empowerment. By applying this approach to other organizations, the value of it in terms of this issue could be studied by comparing it to the experiences accumulated in this study. It is conceivable that a similar approach could be beneficial in studying other organizational issues which depend on employee feedback.

3. This research devoted a considerable amount of effort to exploring the role of the manager in the transition process to support enhanced employee involvement. A further exploration of the change agent role in supporting both managers and other employees in successfully negotiating change seems to be indicated. Although the literature suggests that this role should reside with human resource and organizational development experts, it would be interesting to determine whether this view is held by organizations themselves and whether they have qualified people to fill this role. Is the human resource development practitioner the appropriate choice as the literature suggests? Additional exploration of this issue could certainly benefit from the experience gained through this study and through the growth and development of the sponsoring organization.

This study sought to examine the concept of participation and empowerment in a comprehensive manner and actively involved an organization and its members in the inquiry process. A process framework with supporting data elements was adopted following careful study of literature in the area this research addressed. The research methodology was designed both to collect the necessary data as well as to exemplify participative principles. The findings provided not only a description of the selected organization's progress toward increased participation but also employee input into and enthusiasm for potential improvements to advance the organization's journey.

References

Ary, D., Chester-Jacobs, L. & Razavieh, H. (1990). Introduction to research in education (Fourth Edition). Ontario: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

Baloff, N. & Doherty, E. M. (1989). Potential pitfalls in employee participation. Organizational Dynamics, 18(3), 51-62.

Barczak, G., Smith, C. & Wilemon, D. (1987). Managing large-scale organizational change. Organizational Dynamics, 15(6), 22 -35.

Beckhard, R. (1969). Organization development: Strategies and models. Don Mills, Ontario: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Beckhard, R. (1989). The 1989 Annual: Developing Human Resources (The Eighteenth Annual) (pp. 255-265). California: University Associates Inc.

Beckhard, R. & Harris, R. T. (1977). Organizational transitions: Managing complex change. Don Mills, Ontario: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Bennis, W. (1987). The four competencies of leadership. School Library Media Quarterly, 15(4), 196-199.

Brakel, A. (1985). People and organizations interacting. Toronto: John Wiley & Sons.

Brossard, M. (1990). Workers' objectives and quality improvement. Employee Relations, 12(6), 11-16.

Byrd, R. E. (1987). Corporate leadership skills: A new synthesis. Organizational Dynamics, 16(1), 34-43.

Carnevale, A. P., Gainer, L. & Villet (1990). Training in America: The organization and strategic role of training. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Carr, C. (1991). Managing self-managed workers. Training and Development Journal, 45(9), 37-42.

Chait, R. P. (1982). Look who invented Japanese management. AGB Reports, 24(2), 3-7.

Clemmer, J. (1992). Firing on all cylinders. Toronto: Macmillan Canada.

Dailey, N. (1984). Adult learning and organizations. Training and Development Journal, 38(12), 64-68.

Eiger, N. (1982). The workplace as classroom for democracy: The Swedish experience. New York University Education Quarterly, 13(4), 16-23.

Evered, R. D. & Selman, J. C. (1989). Coaching and the art of management. Organizational Dynamics, 18(2), 16-32.

Ferketish, B. J. & Hayden, J. W. (1992). HRD and quality: The chicken or the egg? Training and Development Journal, 45(11), 38-42.

Geber, B. (1992). From manager into coach. Training, 29(2), 25-31.

Goff, M. R. (1984). Educating for cultural change in the new Bell system. Performance & Instruction, August, 14-17.

Gordon, J. (1992). Performance technology and blueprint for the learning organization. Training, 29(5), 27-36.

Hausser, D. L., Pecorella, P. A. & Wissler, A. L. (1977). Survey-guided development II: A manual for consultants. Toronto: University Associates Inc.

Hellweg, S. A. & Freiber, K. L. (1984). Corporate quality circles: Theoretical and pragmatic extensions. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association. San Francisco. U.S.: California.

Hinckley, Jr., S. R. (1985). A closer look at participation. Organizational Dynamics, 14(3), 57-67.

Holpp, L. (1992). Making choices: Self-directed teams or total quality management. Training, 14(3), 69-76.

Hummel, R. P. (1987). Behind quality management: What workers and a few philosophers have always known and how it adds up to excellence in production. Organizational Dynamics, 16(1), 71-77.

Hutchison, C., Kirkhorn, J., Shmikler, S., Newell, K. & Wills, J. (1988). Leadership skills. Performance & Instruction, September, 2-5.

Imel, S. (1982). Quality circles, implications for training. Washington, DC.: National Institute of Education.

Jamison, K. (1984). The nibble theory and the kernel of power. New York: Paulist Press.

Janson, R. & Gunderson, R. L. (1991). The team approach to companywide change. National Productivity Review, Winter 1990/91, 35-43.

Jessup, H. R. (1990). New roles in team leadership. Training and Development Journal, 44(11), 79-83.

Kahnweiler, W. M. (1991). HRD and empowerment. Training and Development Journal, 45(11), 73-76.

Kilmann, R. H. (1989). A completely integrated model for creating and maintaining organizational success. Organizational Dynamics, 18(1), 4-19.

Kizlios, P. (1990). Crazy about empowerment? Training, 27(12), 47-56.

Kouzes, J. M. & Posner, B. Z. (1989). The 1989 Annual: Developing Human Resources (The Eighteenth Annual) (pp. 233-239). California: University Associates Inc.

Kouzes, J. M. & Posner, B. Z. (1991). Leadership Practices Inventories. Toronto: University Associates Inc.

Kramlinger, T. (1992). Training's role in a learning organization. Training, 29(7), 46-51.

Krueger, R. A. (1988). Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research. California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Lawrie, J. (1990). The ABCs of change management. Training and Development Journal, 44(3), 87-89.

Lee, C. (1990). Beyond teamwork. Training, 27(6), 25-32.

Levine, D. A. & Strauss, G. (1989). Employee participation and involvement. Washington, DC.: Commission on Workforce Quality and Labour Market Efficiency.

Lubin, B., Goodstein, L. D. & Lubin, A. W. (1979). Organizational change sourcebook I: Cases in organization development. California: University Associates Inc.

Marsick, V. J. (1987). Action learning: A strategy for empowering managers. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education. New York: American Association for Adult and Continuing Education.

Meussling, V. (1987). The corporate culture climate at the crossroads: Back to the future. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association. Boston. Indiana: Speech Communication Association.

Moss-Kanter, R. & Stein. B. A. (1979). Life in organizations. New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers.

Murrell, K. L. & Vogt, J. F. (1991). The 1991 Annual: Developing Human Resources (The Twentieth Annual) (pp. 297-305). California: University Associates INC.

Minabe, S. (1986). Japanese competitiveness and Japanese management. Science, 233(4761), 301-304.

Oaklief, C. R. (1987). Advocacy: New role for adult educators. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education. Kansas: American Association for Adult and Continuing Education.

Orsburn, J.D., Moran, L., Musselwhite, E. & Zenger, J. (1990). Self-directed work teams: The new American challenge. Illinois: Business One Irwin.

Ottaway, R. N. (1979). Change agents at work. Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Peters, T. J. & Waterman, Jr., R. H. (1982). In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best-run companies. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

Pinchot III, G. (1989). The 1989 Annual: Developing Human Resources (The Eighteenth Annual) (pp. 241-254). California: University Associates Inc.

Roeber, R. J. C. (1973). The organization in a changing environment. Don Mills: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Rosenthal, N. (1990). Active learning/empowered learning. Adult Learning, 1(5), 16-18.

Schlesinger, L. A. & Oshry, B. (1984). Quality of work life and the manager: Muddle in the middle. Organizational Dynamics, 14(1), 4-19.

Semler, R. (1989). Managing without managers. Harvard Business Review, September-October, 1989, 76-84.

Shonk, J. H. (1991). Team-based organizations. Toronto: University Associates Inc.

Sinetar, M. (1988). Building trust into corporate relationships. Organizational Dynamics, 17(3), 73-89.

Sisco, R. (1992). Put your money where your teams are. Training, 29(7), 41-45.

Smith, C. S. & Brannick, M. T. (1990). A role and expectancy model of participative decision-making: A replication and theoretical extension. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 11, 91-104.

Stanage, S. M. (1987). Adult education as empowerment: A phenomenology of the process of empowering adult learners. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education. Illinois: American Association for Adult and Continuing Education.

Stern, S. & Muta, H. (1990). The Japanese difference. Training and Development Journal, March, 1990, 74-82.

Tjosvold, D. & Tsao, Y. (1989). Productive organizational collaboration: The role of values and cooperation. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 10, 189-195.

Vogt, J. F. & Hunt, B. D. (1988). What really goes wrong with participative work groups? Training and Development Journal, 42(5), 96-100.

Vogt, J. F. & Murrell, K. L. (1991). Empowerment in organizations: How to spark exceptional performance.Toronto: University Associates Inc.

Weaver, R. L. (1990). Guided empowerment. Innovative Higher Education, 14(2), 93-105.

Wellins, R. S. & George, J. (1991). The key to self-directed teams. Training and Development Journal, 45(4), 26-31.

Wellins, R. S. & Byham, W. C. & Wilson, J. M. (1991). Empowered teams. Toronto: University Associates Inc.

Wheeless, V. E. et al. (1982). An analysis of the contribution of participative decision-making and communication with supervisor as predictor of job satisfaction. Research in Higher Education, 18(2), 145-60.

Wilkinson, T. (1989). Empowering employees for a new century. Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. Washington, DC: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.

Zeira, Y. & Avedisian, J. (1989). Organizational planned change: Assessing the chances for success. Organizational Dynamics, 17(4), 31-47.

Zenger, J. H., Musselwhite, E., Hurson, K. & Perrin, C. (1991). Leadership in a team environment. Training and Development Journal. 45(10), 46-52.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

TEAMWORK AND EMPOWERMENT

How Participative do you think your organization is? We really want to know!

This survey will tell us how involved you feel you are in the operation of your company, and how much freedom you feel you have to perform your job well. Although it may look lengthy, this questionnaire has been designed to be easy and quick to complete. If you stick to your first reaction on each question, it will take no more than 20 minutes of your time to fill the whole thing out.

The survey consists of five parts designed to answer the following questions:

Part One:	How do you see your organization?
Part Two:	How is work managed in your organization?
Part Three:	What do you think of the organization's management practices?
Part Four:	How effective are your organization's communication patterns?
Part Five:	How participative is your organization?

In the questions that follow, you are being asked to honestly rate the organization in a number of areas. It will likely be easier for you to answer the questions if you think of your own department. Together, all your individual thoughts will help to build a company picture. Since your responses are totally confidential, please provide your realistic assessment of performance on each factor. We are TRULY interested in what you think of the organization as it is today, and not how it could be. Survey results will be central to the next step of this research -- identifying positive change directions for the future.

Above each question, you will see a range of scores from 1 through 7 with descriptions of what a score of 1 means on the left side, as well as what a score of 7 means on the right side. Please circle a single number that best represents your opinion of your organization's performance on each item.

At the end of the survey, you will find some space to write down any of your thoughts you have not had an opportunity to voice elsewhere in the questionnaire. Please feel free to use this space to write down anything that would be of value to us in gaining a true picture of how well we are doing in the areas of teamwork and empowerment.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO ANSWER THESE
VERY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS!

FOR OFFICE USE

TEAMWORK AND EMPOWERMENT

1-4

General Information

PLEASE CHECK ONE RESPONSE:

1. Are you:

5

___ A Management Team Member?

___ A Team Manager?

___ A Frontline Employee?

2. If you answered "Frontline Employee", pick the statement that best describes your role:

6

___ I provide processing/clerical services for our subscribers and providers.

___ I provide professional/technical services to the company.

___ I am in a front line supervisory capacity.

PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST REPRESENTS YOUR OPINION OF PERFORMANCE FOR EACH ITEM.

PART ONE HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR ORGANIZATION?

FOR OFFICE USE

A CHANGE AND INNOVATION

i. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **7**

We NEVER look for innovative ways to do things.	We ALWAYS look for innovative ways to do things.

ii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ?

We NEVER experiment and take risks with new approaches.	We ALWAYS experiment and take risks with new approaches, even if we might fail.

B SHARED VISION OF THE FUTURE OF THE COMPANY

iii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **9**

We DO NOT HAVE a clear vision that everyone can understand.	We DO HAVE a clear vision that everyone can understand.

iv. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **10**

I HAVE NOT participated in the creation of this vision.	I HAVE participated in the creation of this vision.

v. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **11**

Managers DO NOT clearly demonstrate their commitment to the vision.	Managers clearly demonstrate their commitment to the vision.

vi. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **12**

Staff DO NOT demonstrate their commitment to the vision.	Staff DO demonstrate their commitment to the vision.

FOR OFFICE USE

vii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **13**

I AM NOT hopeful about this organization's future.	I AM hopeful about this organization's future.

C ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

viii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **14**

We have TOO MANY organizational layers to get the job done effectively.	We have the RIGHT NUMBER of organizational layers to get the job done effectively.

ix. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **15**

Our work is organized around traditional lines of reporting.	Our work is organized around who is the best group to do the job no matter where they work.

D LEARNING

x. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **16**

I DO NOT HAVE the skills I need to do my job well.	I DO HAVE the skills I need to do my job well.

xi. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **17**

Our company IS NOT willing to invest in learning and developmental opportunities for ALL staff.	Our company IS willing to invest in learning and developmental opportunities for ALL staff.

xii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **18**

Our company DOES NOT treat mistakes as learning opportunities.	Our company DOES treat mistakes as learning opportunities.

PART TWO HOW IS WORK MANAGED IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

FOR OFFICE USE

A INDEPENDENCE

xiii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **19**

Executive management seems to make all the decisions.	I have full authority over decisions affecting my job.

xiv. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **20**

I have NO sense of ownership for the work I do.	I feel a sense of ownership for the work I do.

xv. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **21**

My job IS NOT complex enough to allow for initiative and decision-making.	My job IS complex enough to allow for initiative and decision-making.

xvi. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **22**

I have NO freedom or support for initiatives.	I have FULL freedom and support for initiatives.

B SHARED INFORMATION

xvii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **23**

I DON'T HAVE the information I need to do my job well.	I HAVE full information regarding my job and the organization.

xviii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **24**

I get information TOO LATE.	I get the information I need in a TIMELY manner.

C RESOURCE AVAILABILITY

xix. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **25**

I have NOTHING I need to do my job well.	I have EVERYTHING I need to do my job well.

			FOR OFFICE USE
xx.	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 ?	26
	Getting the resources I need is HARD.	Getting the resources I need is EASY.	
D	**RECOGNITION**		
xxi	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 ?	27
	I am NEVER recognized, even for superb work.	I am ALWAYS recognized for what I do, even if my initiative fails.	
xxii.	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 ?	28
	We are NOT recognized for INDIVIDUAL efforts.	We ARE recognized for INDIVIDUAL efforts.	
xxiii.	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 ?	29
	TEAM efforts are NOT recognized.	TEAM efforts ARE recognized.	
xxiv.	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 ?	30
	Managers NEVER look for ways to publicly recognize their staff.	Managers ALWAYS look for ways to publicly recognize their staff.	
xxv.	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 ?	31
	We DO NOT have established ways of celebrating accomplishments, big or small.	We DO have established ways of celebrating accomplishments, big or small.	

PART III WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE ORGANIZATION'S MANAGEMENT PRACTICES?

FOR OFFICE USE

A MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

xxvi. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? 32

Managers ARE NOT committed to the team concept.	Managers ARE committed to the team concept.

xxvii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? 33

I NEVER feel supported by my manager.	I ALWAYS feel supported by my manager.

xxviii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? 34

Managers NEVER practice what they preach.	Managers ALWAYS practice what they preach.

xxix. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? 35

It is more important to satisfy the boss.	It is more important to do the job right.

B MANAGEMENT ROLES

xxx. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? 36

Managers ARE NOT WILLING to adjust responsibility and authority downward.	Managers ARE WILLING to adjust responsibility and authority downward.

xxxi. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? 37

Managers ARE NOT WILLING to change their own roles and behavior.	Managers ARE WILLING to change their own roles and behavior.

xxxii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? 38

Managers want their staff to think they know more about their jobs than they do, and tend to work alone.	Managers inspire others, set an example and work jointly with others.

xxxiii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? 39

Managers DO NOT encourage us to grow and develop.	Managers DO encourage us to grow and develop.

PART FOUR HOW EFFECTIVE ARE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S COMMUNICATION PATTERNS?

FOR OFFICE USE

A OPEN COMMUNICATION

xxxiv. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **40**

No one talks to anybody. — Everyone talks freely about ideas and concerns.

xxxv. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **41**

I NEVER know what's expected of me. — I ALWAYS know what's expected of me.

xxxvi. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **42**

Change is AVOIDED. — Change is WELCOMED as an opportunity.

B TRUST AND RESPECT

xxxvii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **43**

I NEVER feel trusted and respected. — I ALWAYS feel trusted and respected.

xxxviii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **44**

I NEVER treat others with dignity and respect. — I ALWAYS treat others with dignity and respect.

xxxix. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **45**

My opinions are NEVER listened to. — My opinions are ALWAYS listened to.

PART FIVE HOW PARTICIPATIVE IS YOUR ORGANIZATION?

FOR OFFICE USE

A PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING

xl. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **46**

I AM NOT asked for my ideas in planning for change.	I AM asked for my ideas in planning for change.

xli. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **47**

I AM NOT asked for ideas on how to plan and organize my work.	I AM asked for ideas on how to plan and organize my work.

xlii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **48**

I AM NOT involved in planning for the organization's future.	I AM involved in planning for the organization's future.

B TEAMWORK

xliii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **49**

We DO NOT operate in a spirit of teamwork.	We DO operate in a spirit of teamwork.

xliv. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **50**

We DO NOT share our successes and our failures.	We DO share our successes and our failures.

xlv. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **51**

My work DOES NOT lend itself to a team-based approach	My work DOES lend itself to a team-based approach rather than to individual effort.

xlvi. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? **52**

Our work environment, vision, and values DO NOT support teamwork and empowerment.	Our work environment,vision, and values DO support teamwork and empowerment.

FOR OFFICE USE

xlvii. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? 53

The best way to get work done is to set deadlines, constantly monitor progress and discipline those who are late.

The best way to get work done is to make everyone aware of deadlines and how they affect others' work and recognize timely performance.

xlviii 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? 54

Managers work alone and take credit for results.

Managers work with others in getting the job done and make sure everyone shares in successes.

xlix. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ? 55

We DO NOT use special teams effectively to implement projects.

We DO use special teams effectively to implement projects.

l. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 56

We DO NOT have teamwork across functional lines. We guard our territory very closely.

We DO have teamwork across functional lines.

Is there anything else you would like to say about the spirit of teamwork and collaboration in your company? Are there other factors which create or inhibit a participative environment? Please write down any additional comments you would like to make in the space below.

PLEASE COMPLETE BY FRIDAY, JUNE 26, AND RETURN IN THE ATTACHED CONFIDENTIAL ENVELOPE.

ONCE AGAIN, THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. YOUR OPINIONS ARE OF GREAT VALUE TO US IN MAKING TEAMWORK COME TO LIFE IN YOUR COMPANY!

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT PACKAGE AND SESSION MATERIALS

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 30, 1992

TO: Focus Group Participants

FROM: Irene Rogozinski

SUBJECT: **Teamwork and Empowerment**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the second phase of the study that I am conducting on participation and empowerment. Together, we will have a chance to look at both **WHAT IS** and identify ways to get to **WHAT COULD BE.** At the focus group session on _____ at ______. in _____, we will be paying particular attention to the similarities and differences between the way managers and employees responded.

I am attaching some materials to help you get ready for what promises to be a very lively discussion. Your package includes:

* A copy of the questionnaire and a condensed version of each question for you to refer to as you look at the results. The actual questionnaire will help you to remember exactly what was asked. The summary will show you how each question was shortened on the enclosed chart.

* A chart which identifies items on which both groups agreed, items on which there was quite a difference in perceptions and items in which the difference in scores was fairly small. Each of these sections includes detailed explanations of how to read and understand them. I also enclose a chart which shows overall average scores as well as average scores for each group.

At our session, we will be sharing our answers to the following questions. So, please think about them before you come to the focus group:

* In general, what do you think of the results of the survey?

* Why do you think perceptions are similar in some areas and so different in others?

* What do you think of some of the initiatives that the company has already launched in an attempt build on its commitment to teamwork? i.e. general assembly, shared vision development, etc.

* What **FOUR specific** changes do you think the company still needs to make to INCREASE the spirit of teamwork?

- What order do you think these changes need to happen in?
- Is there anything that the Staff Development Department can do to help the company make these changes?

Please remember that anything that is shared at our session will be **TOTALLY CONFIDENTIAL**. The idea is to make sure that everyone feels free to share anything they think will make a difference to the company.

I am really excited about having this opportunity to work with you and am committed to ensuring that the results of these sessions truly make a difference!

If you have any questions or suggestions before our session, please give me a call.

Once again, **THANK YOU** for agreeing to participate.

Irene

TEAWORK AND EMPOWERMENT SURVEY RESULTS

QUESTION
PART ONE: HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR ORGANIZATION
A. Change Openness to innovation
Experimentation/risk taking
B. Shared Vision Existence of a vision
Participation in creation of the vision
Manager Commitment to the vision
Staff Commitment to the vision
Hope for the Organization's future
C. Organizational Structure Number of layers
Traditional vs team approach to work
D. Learning Presence of skills to perform duties
Company's willingness to invest in learning
Company's stance toward mistakes
PART TWO: HOW IS WORK MANAGED
A. Independence Authority over decisions
Sense of job ownership
Job complexity
Support for initiative
B. Shared Information Information availability
Information timeliness

C. Resource availability Presence of adequate resources
Ease of acquiring resources
D. Recognition Personal sense of recognition
Recognition of individual efforts
Recognition of team efforts
Recognition from managers
Established ways of celebrating accomplishments
PART THREE: MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
A. Management Commitment Manager commitment to team concept
Manager support
Walking the talk
Pleasing the boss vs doing job right
B. Management roles Willingness to adjust authority and responsiblity
Manager willingness to change roles and behavior
Manager image
Manager encouragement for growth
PART FOUR: COMMUNICATION PATTERNS
A. Open communication Sense of openness
Clarity of expectations
Stance towards change
B. Trust and respect Personal sense of respect
Treatment of others
Perceived value of personal opinions

PART FIVE: HOW PARTICIPATIVE IS YOUR ORGANIZATION?
A. Planning and decision making Staff input into change
Staff input into work organization
Staff involvement in planning for the company's future
B. Teamwork Team atmosphere
Atmosphere of shared success
Suitability of work to team approach
Cultural support of teamwork and empowerment
Work approach
Manager willingness to collaborate
Effective use of special teams
Teamwork across functional lines

COMPARISON OF MANAGER AND EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS

Compatible Perceptions	**Positive**	**Improvement Areas**
These are the questionnaire items on which the scores of the two groups were close. The bolded items were very close.	__*Openness to innovation__ __*Hope for the__ __*Organization's future__ __*Company's willingness to invest in learning__ __*Company's stance toward mistakes__ __*Information availability__ __*Recognition of team efforts__ __*Manager commitment to team concept__ __*Perceived value of personal opions__ __*Staff input into work organization__ __*Work approach__ *Manager Commitment to the vision *Presence of adequate resources *Ease of acquiring resources *Willingness to adjust authority and responsibility *Clarity of expectations *Personal sense of respect *Treatment of others *Cultural support of teamwork and empowerment *Manager willingness to collaborate	__*Manager willingness to change roles and behavior__ __*Recognition from managers__ *Traditional vs team approach to work *Information timeliness *Established ways of celebrating accomplishments *Walking the talk

Significant Discrepancies	**Manager Score Higer**	**Employee Score Higher**
These are the questionnaire items on which the scores were quite far apart. They are categorized according to which group responded more positively.	*Participation in creation of the vision *Job complexity *Staff involvement in planning for the company's future	*Existence of a shared vision *Staff commitment to the vision

Minor Discrepancies	**Manager Score Higher**	**Employee Score Higher**
Although there was a difference on these items, the distance between scores was not that large. These items are categorized according to the group that appeared to feel more positive. The bolded items are those in which the distance was larger.	***Number of layers** ***Sense of job ownership** ***Support for initiative** ***Suitability of work to team approach** *Authority over decisions *Manager support *Manager image	***Presence of skills to perform duties** ***Manager encouragement for growth** ***Staff input into change** *Experimentation/risk taking *Personal sense of recognition *Recognition of individual efforts *Pleasing the boss vs doing job right *Sense of openness *Stance towards change *Team atmosphere *Atmosphere of shared success *Effective use of special teams *Teamwork across functional lines

TEAMWORK AND EMPOWERMENT SURVEY RESULTS: MANAGER AND EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS

QUESTION	Manager Average Scores	Employee Average Scores	Combined Average Scores
PART ONE: HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR ORGANIZATION			
A. Change Openness to innovation	5.4	5.3	5.5
Experimentation/risk taking	4.9	5.1	5.0
B. Shared Vision Existence of a vision	4.1	4.9	4.7
Participation in creation of the vision	5.1	4.6	4.8
Manager Commitment to the vision	4.5	4.7	4.6
Staff Commitment to the vision	3.9	4.5	4.4
Hope for the Organization's future	6.1	5.9	6.0
C. Organizational Structure Number of layers	5.0	4.4	4.6
Traditional vs team approach to work	4.3	4.4	4.4
D. Learning Presence of skills to perform duties	5.8	6.2	6.0
Company's willingness to invest in learning	6.1	6.2	6.2
Company's stance toward mistakes	5.1	5.1	5.1
PART TWO: HOW IS WORK MANAGED			
A. Independence Authority over decisions	4.5	4.2	4.3
Sense of job ownership	5.8	5.3	5.4
Job complexity	6.4	5.4	5.6
Support for initiative	5.5	5.1	5.2
B. Shared Information Information availability	5.3	5.1	5.2
Information timeliness	4.7	4.5	4.6

C. Resource availability Presence of adequate resources	5.1	5.3	5.3
Ease of acquiring resources	4.7	4.9	4.9
D. Recognition Personal sense of recognition	4.7	4.9	4.8
Recognition of individual efforts	4.7	4.8	4.8
Recognition of team efforts	5.3	5.3	5.3
Recognition from managers	4.8	4.7	4.8
Established ways of celebrating accomplishments	4.8	4.7	4.7
PART THREE: MANAGEMENT PRACTICES			
A. Management Commitment Manager commitment to team concept	5.3	5.3	5.4
Manager support	5.5	5.1	5.2
Walking the talk	4.8	4.8	4.8
Pleasing the boss vs doing job right	5.6	5.8	5.8
B. Management roles Willingness to adjust authority and responsiblity	5.0	5.1	5.1
Manager willingness to chang roles and behavior	4.7	4.8	4.8
Manager image	4.9	4.9	4.9
Manager encouragement for growth	5.3	5.4	5.4
PART FOUR: COMMUNICATION PATTERNS			
A. Open communication Sense of openness	4.9	5.4	5.3
Clarity of expectations	5.2	5.3	5.3
Stance towards change	5.3	5.5	5.4
B. Trust and respect Personal sense of respect	5.2	5.2	5.2

Treatment of others	6.2	6.2	6.2
Perceived value of personal opinions	5.4	5.4	5.4
PART FIVE: HOW PARTICIPATIVE IS YOUR ORGANIZATION?			
A. Planning and decision making Staff input into change	5.4	5.2	5.3
Staff input into work organization	5.4	5.4	5.4
Staff involvement in planning for the company's future	5.3	4.4	4.7
B. Teamwork Team atmosphere	5.4	5.7	5.6
Atmosphere of shared success	5.0	5.3	5.2
Suitability of work to team approach	5.9	5.5	5.6
Cultural support of teamwork and empowerment	5.6	5.5	5.5
Work approach	6.1	6.1	6.1
Manager willingness to collaborate	5.2	5.0	5.1
Effective use of special teams	4.8	5.0	5.0
Teamwork across functional lines	4.8	4.9	4.9

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 6, 1992

TO: Focus Group Participants

FROM: Irene Rogozinski

SUBJECT: **Teamwork and Empowerment**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the second phase of the study that I am conducting for on participation and empowerment. Together, we will have a chance to look at both **WHAT IS** and identify ways to get to **WHAT COULD BE.** At the focus group session on _______ at ______ p.m., we will be paying particular attention to the similarities and differences between the way head office and branch office staff responded.

I am attaching some materials to help you get ready for what promises to be a very lively discussion. Your package includes:

* A copy of the questionnaire and a condensed version of each question for you to refer to as you look at the results. The actual questionnaire will help you to remember exactly what was asked. The summary will show you how each question was shortened on the enclosed chart.

* A chart which gives you the average score on each item for head office and branch office staff as well as a combined average reflecting the scores of all who responded. I also enclose a chart whci shows over average scores as well as average score for each group.

At our session, we will be sharing our answers to the following questions. So, please think about them before you come to the focus group:

* In general, what do you think of the results of the survey?

* Why do you think perceptions are similar in some areas and so different in others?

* What do you think of some of the initiatives that the company has already launched in an attempt build on its commitment to teamwork? i.e. general assembly, shared vision development, etc.

* What **FOUR specific** changes do you think the company still needs to make to INCREASE the spirit of teamwork?

* What order do you think these changes need to happen in?

* Is there anything that the Staff Development Department can do to help the company make these changes?

Please remember that anything that is shared at our session will be **TOTALLY CONFIDENTIAL**. The idea is to make sure that everyone feels free to share anything they think will make a difference to the company.

I am really excited about having this opportunity to work with you and am committed to ensuring that the results of these sessions truly make a difference!

If you have any questions or suggestions before our session, please give me a call.

Once again, **THANK YOU** for agreeing to participate.

Irene

TEAMWORK AND EMPOWERMENT SURVEY RESULTS: HEAD OFFICE AND BRANCH OFFICE PERCEPTIONS

QUESTION	Head Office Average Scores	Branch Office Average Scores	Combined Average Scores
PART ONE: HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR ORGANIZATION			
A. Change Openness to innovation	5.5298	5.1034	5.490
Experimentation/risk taking	5.0318	4.7931	5.010
B. Shared Vision Existence of a vision	4.7053	4.8276	4.717
Participation in creation of the vision	4.7173	5.7172	4.792
Manager Commitment to the vision	4.6135	4.7241	4.624
Staff Commitment to the vision	4.3251	4.8276	4.372
Hope for the Organization's future	5.9614	6.1724	5.981
C. Organizational Structure Number of layers	4.5658	4.6207	4.571
Traditional vs team approach to work	4.4421	4.4828	4.446
D. Learning Presence of skills to perform duties	6.0599	5.7586	6.032
Company's willingness to invest in learning	6.1993	6.0690	6.187
Company's stance toward mistakes	5.1014	5.3448	5.124
PART TWO: HOW IS WORK MANAGED			
A. Independence Authority over decisions	4.2797	4.2414	4.276
Sense of job ownership	5.4346	5.1379	5.407
Job complexity	5.6503	5.1034	5.600
Support for initiative	5.2098	5.1034	5.200
B. Shared Information Information availability	5.1783	5.3103	5.190

Information timeliness	4.6386	4.3448	4.611
C. Resource availability Presence of adequate resources	5.2912	5.0690	5.271
Ease of acquiring resources	4.8881	5.0345	4.902
D. Recognition Personal sense of recognition	4.7668	5.0690	4.795
Recognition of individual efforts	4.7482	5.1724	4.788
Recognition of team efforts	5.2790	5.2759	5.279
Recognition from managers	4.7651	4.7586	4.765
Established ways of celebrating accomplishments	4.6961	4.7931	4.705
PART THREE: MANAGEMENT PRACTICES			
A. Management Commitment Manager commitment to team concept	5.3310	5.6552	5.361
Manager support	5.2206	5.4483	5.242
Walking the talk	4.8369	4.7931	4.833
Pleasing the boss vs doing job right	5.7676	6.1379	5.802
B. Management roles Willingness to adjust authority and responsiblity	5.0707	5.3793	5.099
Manager willingness to change roles and behavior	4.7880	4.8621	4.795
Manager image	4.9158	4.7586	4.901
Manager encouragement for growth	5.3566	5.6552	5.384
PART FOUR: COMMUNICATION PATTERNS			
A. Open communication Sense of openness	5.1993	6.0000	5.273
Clarity of expectations	5.2622	5.5862	5.292
Stance towards change	5.4225	5.3793	5.419
B. Trust and respect Personal sense of respect	5.1930	5.6897	5.239

Treatment of others	6.1972	6.2759	6.204
Perceived value of personal opinions	5.3239	5.5862	5.348
PART FIVE: HOW PARTICIPATIVE IS YOUR ORGANIZATION?			
A. Planning and decision making Staff input into change	5.2782	5.6897	5.316
Staff input into work organization	5.3950	5.4828	5.403
Staff involvement in planning for the company's future	4.6572	4.9655	4.686
B. Teamwork Team atmosphere	5.5699	5.8621	5.597
Atmosphere of shared success	5.2226	5.4483	5.244
Suitability of work to team approach	5.6000	5.6207	5.602
Cultural support of teamwork and empowerment	5.5053	5.6897	5.522
Work approach	6.1166	6.1034	6.115
Manager willingness to collaborate	5.0912	5.2414	5.105
Effective use of special teams	4.9435	5.0345	4.952
Teamwork across functional lines	4.8732	4.7931	4.866

FOCUS GROUP FORMAT

1. **INTRODUCTION - *5 min.***

   * Thank you for agreeing to participate - a true opportunity to make a difference.

   * Agenda

   * Confidentiality - permission to tape record the session.

   * Next steps - summarizing the feedback and preparing it for sharing with the staff members you are representing.

   * Preparation materials - to help look at the differences in perceptions.

2. **OVERALL RESPONSE TO SURVEY RESULTS - *5 min.***

   * What were your first reactions to the results? Any thoughts on the reasons behind why the two groups think alike on some things and differently on others?

3. **REASONS FOR PERCEPTIONS - *20 min. overall***
   10 min. small group, 10 min. large group

   * What are your thoughts on the reasons behind the way survey results turned out?

   Group 1 - Why do the two groups agree?

   Group 2 - Why do the two groups disagree?

4. **CURRENT INITIATIVES - *5 min.***

   * Your invitation memo contained some ideas on some of the team-oriented things the company is doing. Can you think of others?

   * In your view, how well are these initiatives working?

5. **SUGGESTED CHANGES - *20 min. overall***
   10 min. small group, 10 min. large group

   * Looking at the results, the reasons you have generated and what we already have going, in your groups come to an agreement on FOUR changes and their priority order that the company could make to make you feel more empowered and part of a team.

6. CHANGE AGENT ROLE - *5 MIN.*

* Most of you have seen departments who play a change agent role within your company in action. What do you think these areas could do to help make your suggested changes happen?

TEAMWORK AND EMPOWERMENT FOCUS GROUP

AGENDA

* Introduction

* Overall Response to Results

* Reasons for Perception Similarities and Differences

* Current Team-oriented Initiatives

* Change Suggestions

* Change Agent Role

My overall response to the results was:

Why do the groups agree?

Why do the groups disagree?

What is the company already doing?

How well are these initiatives working?

The company needs to:

A change agent could help by:

APPENDIX C

-

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK MATERIALS

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 17 , 1992

TO: Focus Group Participants

FROM: Irene Rogozinski

SUBJECT: **Session Results**

I would like to thank you once again for participating so enthusiastically at our recent session. I enjoyed the time we spent together and am very gratified with the results.

As promised, here is the summary of the group's thoughts. I want to make sure that what I have documented is accurate so please share any feedback you have with me. You can either document your thoughts right on the package and send it back to me OR you can call me and give me your feedback personally. Either way, I would appreciate hearing from you BY FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20.

I am also very interested in finding out what you thought of your focus group experience. So, if you could take a few minutes and complete the attached CONFIDENTIAL feedback sheet, I would be very grateful.

The next step for me will be to compile the results of all of the focus group sessions and begin sharing them with everyone.

I am looking forward to receiving your feedback BOTH on the results of your session AS WELL AS your experience as a focus group participant.

Thanks again!

Irene

FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS
FEEDBACK

1. **In general, I found my session:**

___ EXTREMELY beneficial
___ VERY beneficial
___ Beneficial
___ SOMEWHAT beneficial
___ NOT AT ALL beneficial

2. **The agenda used to guide the session was:**

___ EXTREMELY appropriate
___ VERY appropriate
___ Appropriate
___ SOMEWHAT appropriate
___ NOT AT ALL appropriate

What I liked about it:

What I didn't like about it:

3. **I was able to share my ideas:**

___ EXTREMELY freely
___ VERY freely
___ Freely
___ SOMEWHAT freely
___ NOT AT ALL freely

What helped me to share my thoughts:

What discouraged me from sharing my thoughts:

3. **The facilitator seemed to be:**

___ EXTREMELY objective and willing to hear all ideas
NOT AT ALL judgmental

___ VERY objective and willing to hear all ideas
NOT judgmental

___ Objective and willing to hear all ideas
FAIRLY non-judgmental

___ SOMEWHAT objective and willing to hear all ideas
SOMEWHAT judgmental

___ NOT AT ALL objective and unwilling to hear all ideas
VERY judgmental

I liked:

I didn't like:

5. **I thought the organization of the session including the initial telephone invitation, pre-session package, facility, agenda and process, use of time and follow-up was:**

___ EXTREMELY effective
___ VERY effective
___ Effective
___ SOMEWHAT effective
___ NOT AT ALL effective

What I liked:

What I could be improved:

6. **Do you think the feedback you gave at the session will result in positive change? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

7. **Do you have any other ideas or suggestions?**

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS FEEDBACK SHEET